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THE

WORKS

OF

JOSEPH BELLAMY, D. D.

FIRST PASTOR OF

THE CHURCH IN BETHLEM, CONN.

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
DOCTRINAL TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.
1853.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Executive Committee of the Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, in prosecuting the design of its organization, offer to the public a new and improved edition of the works of Dr. Bellamy, with an original and interesting memoir, prepared with much care and research, by Rev. Tryon Edwards, D. D., of New London. The Committee would also announce their intention to issue a series of books of like character, including some of the works of our Puritan Fathers, and of later distinguished divines of our country. In doing this, we do not feel responsible for every sentiment that may be advanced, as we do not presume to abridge their works, or to alter their phraseology. We leave each author to utter his own views, in his own way; that the public may have a knowledge, not only of their real sentiments, but also of their style of writing, and in some measure, the times in which they lived. We would have those eminent men, who contributed so much, by their stern integrity, their consistent piety, and their ardent attachment to the unadulterated truths of God's word, to give character and stability to our institutions, speak for themselves. We revere their memory, and praise God for such an ancestry. Their works contain excellencies which are not often found in the present issues from the press. Their intimate and living acquaintance with the Bible, their profound mode of thinking, the spiritual tone of their piety, and their masterly discussions of the principles which have given character to the churches of New England, are scarcely less necessary to us, than they were to their contemporaries.

In the growth of our institutions, and the rapid increase of our population, many errors of pernicious tendency have come in, and it becomes needful to recur to those first principles, which occupied so much of the attention of our fathers, and which they regarded as indispensable to the peace, purity, and prosperity of the churches.

There is an extensive and growing conviction, among wise and good men, of the desirableness of republishing the works of the chief fathers of New England. And what better monument than this could, in these days, be reared to the memory of those profound scholars and theologians, or what better could be done to perpetuate their influence in the churches of our land? To transmit to succeeding generations their testimony, seems to us to be a solemn duty, inasmuch as we owe to them a large debt, not merely a denominational, but a national debt of gratitude; for some of them founded, not only our churches, but virtually our commonwealth. And whatever remains among us that is lovely and of good report, whether in private character, or in social and public happiness, had its origin, in no inconsiderable degree, with our Puritan fathers.

In editing the works of Bellamy, the Committee are deeply impressed with a sense of his power as a writer. His True Religion Delineated, and his Treatise on the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin, are extraordinary productions, and well adapted to every period of time. His articles on Early Piety, and on Family Religion, are fitted alike to impress the young with a sense of duty, and to aid parents in the government and instruction of their households. His other articles, some of which were called forth by the errors of his day, not only give us an interesting view of the theology of his time, but furnish us with very valuable theological distinctions and discussions. The works of Bellamy are eminently doctrinal, and eminently practical. The well read theologian, as also every Christian head of a family, and every intelligent church member, may derive from their perusal much valuable instruction.

Some of the articles in this edition have passed through several editions, in this and in other countries. All of them, however, have been so long out of print, that for years it has been almost impossible to procure a copy. This fact, and their eminent fitness to do good, have led to the issue of this edition, containing some additional matter from original manuscripts. The edition published in New York, nearly half a century ago, had prefixed to it a recommendation by some of the most prominent divines of that day, in which they say, "His ability to illustrate the truths of the gospel, and to trace them through all their connections and dependencies, and to impress them on the conscience and heart, has been possessed by few. We consider him as one of the most distinguished and useful writers of the last age. And while men are found eager rather to obtain elevated views of the gospel and kingdom of Christ, and the feeling of enlightened and sublime devotion, than to gratify a mere literary taste, the writings of Dr. Bellamy will never be neglected. They appear to us eminently calculated to promote the knowledge of God in the world, and to make men wise, good, and happy."

The reviewers of True Religion Delineated, in the London Evangelical Magazine, say, "The value of Dr. Bellamy's writings is already well known to the religious world; but we are obliged to the Rev. Andrew Fuller, for his history and recommendations of this work, which we hope will introduce it to those persons who are yet unacquainted with it. The author's leading object is to discriminate between the Law and the Gospel, and to define and illustrate the duties which they respectively require. We hope that the circulation of this volume will be as extensive as its contents are interesting and important, and that students of divinity, especially, will avail themselves of the information which it contains."

With these views the Committee fully accord; and believing that the work we now issue is well fitted to detect error and delusion, to exhibit and enforce the pure and distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, to direct inquiring souls, and to edify, comfort, and establish experienced Christians, we now commit it to the public, with the prayer that a divine blessing may go with it, and make it the means of spiritual life and salvation to many souls.

BOSTON, *January*, 1850.

PREFACE.

THE Memoir of Dr. Bellamy has been prepared almost entirely from original sources. Free use has, indeed, been made of the "funeral sermon," and its "appendix," prefixed to the New York edition of his works. But for the many additional facts and incidents, town, county, and church records have been searched, numerous manuscripts examined, and authentic anecdotes obtained from fathers in the ministry, several of whom were already on the stage before Dr. Bellamy was taken from it. Especial acknowledgments should be made of the urbanity and kind assistance of the late Joseph H. Bellamy, Esq., who, when the preparation of this Memoir was commenced, was the only surviving grandson of Dr. Bellamy; from whom were received the manuscripts and papers of his distinguished ancestor; and who had scarcely delivered them, when he was cut down by death. Had the preserved letters from Dr. Bellamy been as numerous as those of his many correspondents addressed to him, and still in possession of the writer, a rich addition to his biography might have been before us from his own hand. It is hoped, however, that the Memoir, as it is, may not be unacceptable, and that the entire work may prove a valuable addition to the permanent theological literature of our land.

T. E.

NEW LONDON, CONN., *February*, 1850.

MEMOIR.

It is a duty which every age owes alike to itself and the future, to perpetuate the memory of its distinguished and useful men. In this respect, the period in which Dr. Joseph Bellamy lived, has not done justice to the cause of truth, to the world, or to him. It is the design of the following Memoir, as far as possible, to supply the deficiency.

John Bellamy,* the earliest known ancestor of Joseph, is said to have come from London to New Haven, Connecticut, at the early settlement of the latter place. Having married, he went back to arrange his affairs for a permanent residence in this country; and returning, was lost, in 1647, in the famous "Lamberton Ship," which was seen from New Haven, refracted in the clouds,† and was probably afterwards driven off the coast, and with all on board perished.

The fruit of the marriage alluded to was an only son, *Matthew Bellamy*, called in the New Haven records, "the schoolmaster," the date of whose birth is unknown. In 1671, he married Bethia, daughter of Timothy Ford, who was one of the early settlers of New Haven, and a signer of the "Plantation Covenant." In the same year, he went to Guilford, where it was voted, in town meeting, to hire him for twenty pounds as schoolmaster "on trial;" and the next year, to request him "to go on with his work," as also to give him "a parcel of land by the mill-pond," to be laid out for a house-lot. He afterwards appears at various places, engaged in his vocation — at Stamford and Saybrook, in 1675; at Fairfield in 1681; afterwards at Killingly and Lyme; and in 1689 is noted as "*not lately heard of.*" His children were Bethia, born 1673; Elizabeth, born 1674; Mary, born 1676; and *Matthew*, born February, 1677—8. No record is found of his death. His widow,

* The name is not uncommon in the early records, and is variously spelt — *Belomy, Balomie, Bellamye, Bellamy*, &c.

† See the letter of Rev. James Pierrepont, in Mather's Magnalia, and also in Barber's "Connecticut Historical Collections" p. 162.

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its height. Many were seemingly converted." After this, religion again declined, till 1753, when another "reformation followed," as others frequently did in the course of his ministry.

In the "great awakening" in New England and other parts of America, which began in 1740, and was at its height in 1742, his labors were greatly multiplied and blessed. Being already known as an earnest, spiritual, and powerful preacher, he was constantly sent for from different parts of Connecticut and the neighboring colonies; and seeing the fields white to the harvest, he willingly responded to the calls made for his services. His record shows, that, in the two years commencing March, 1741, he preached four hundred and fifty-eight times, in two hundred and thirteen places * beside his own parish; often preaching repeatedly in a day, and in one case, sixty-eight times in one hundred and five successive days, of which twenty-four times were on the same number of consecutive days. If an opinion of his discourses on these occasions may be formed from the texts on which they were founded, they must have been in a high degree rousing and instructive, admirably fitted to convince of sin, and to point to Christ as the only Savior.† Multitudes, at these times, flocked to listen to the word from his lips, and crowded to his lodgings for private instruction; and he was apparently the instrument of salvation to great numbers that heard him.

As a specimen of many letters addressed to him at this period, one, from a leading member ‡ of the church at Hartford, says, "I have often heard of your zeal for the Lord, and your compassion towards the perishing world; and I long to have you lend your endeavors for the further awakening, convicting, and carrying along such a secure people as we are, and for beating down the opposition that so mightily exerts itself among us. We stand in need of such helpers, though the work is the Lord's." Another, from President Burr,§ then at Elizabeth Town, says, "It is reviving to hear from you. I bless the Lord, he has taught you to rejoice always; that he feeds you with the heavenly

* This includes places where he preached more than once, counting each visit as if made to a new place.

† As specimens of his subjects, the following are taken at random: "The Prodigal Son;" "Alive without the Law;" "The Barren Fig-tree;" "The Unbelieving condemned;" "The Pharisee and Publican;" "Strive to enter the Strait Gate;" "The Lamb of God taking away Sin;" "God commending His Love;" "The only Ark of Safety;" "The faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation;" "The Wages of Sin;" "The Harvest past;" "Christ precious;" "Glorying in the Cross;" "Living by Faith;" "The lost Sheep;" "The Weary and Heavy-laden invited to Christ;" "The Wrath of the Lamb," etc., etc.

‡ MS. letter of Thomas Seymour, June 20, 1741.

§ MS. letter, January 13, 1741—2.

manna. . . . The Lord has given you such clear discoveries of his love, I hope you will appear open and bold for him against all opposers. . . . I hope now you are on the mount, you are praying for your unworthy brother." And that he was thus "open and bold," appears from the fact, that when invited to go and preach in Wallingford, he went, though there was so much opposition there to the revival, "that a number of men said they stood ready at any time with clubs, so that, if any new-light minister came to preach, they would club him or stone him;* and his labors there were richly blessed.†

As the "great awakening" declined, it was succeeded, for a time, by a wild enthusiasm, and false religion under various aspects and names. Ignorant and conceited pretenders set themselves up as public teachers; error in doctrine and extravagance in action increased; divisions and separations were multiplied, and the ways of Zion mourned. In these circumstances, Mr. Bellamy, feeling that his prospect of usefulness in itinerating was clouded, again confined his labors almost entirely to his own people,‡ faithfully setting forth to them the great doctrines of the gospel, and the distinguishing tests of Christian character, and doing all in his power to build them up in truth and holiness. About this time, he writes as follows to Wheelock; and again, in reply to a letter from David Brainard: —

"BETHLEM, *Dec.* 21, 1742.

"VERY DEAR BROTHER: I want very much you should write and print on experimental religion; and if you will take the matter into close consideration, I doubt not you will. Surely you would comfort the people of God, stop the mouths of the enemy, do good in those places where you have no opportunity to preach, and be a blessing to mankind to the latest posterity. Dear brother, say not, It cannot be worth while for ME, that am every way unfit. The Lord will be with you and help you. Dear Father Mills has been making that excuse till of late; but now he finds great sweetness and freedom in writing. To conclude, I long to have you writing. My dear brother, you know I love you dearly, but I feel myself a poor sinner.

"To REV. MR. E. WHEELOCK." "J. BELLAMY.

"P. S. My love to madam and your children, and all that love the

* MS. letter of Israel Johnson, March 25, 1742.

† Wheelock, for example, writes, "I bless God for what I hear he has done by your ministry at Wallingford."

‡ See, in this connection, p. 710 of this Memoir.

Lord Jesus in sincerity. At the bottom of my heart, I am afraid your scholar has no grace. I wish you would examine him. In this part of the government, these things are observable — Christians are purifying; hypocrites are dying; sinners are sleeping; opposers think the day is their own. There is a story that Whitefield is come to Carolina.

"BETHLEM, *March* 7, 1743.

"To MR. D. BRAINARD, once a member of Yale College, &c.

"DEAREST BROTHER: Last night I received yours of February 4, 1743, from Saybrook. I read it, and loved you, and pitied you, and felt a sweet mixture of grief, and sorrow, and joy. You seem dearer to me than all the world beside. It was not for want of love I did not come and see you from Branford; nor is it from want of love I do not now set out for New York to meet you there. But, dear brother, we must travel far asunder; though, by your letter, I see it is through much the same wilderness. I hope we shall meet in the same blessed world at last. Dear brother, all your sore conflicts do and will work for your good. Only keep on following after the Lord, and verily he will be kind. (Isaiah xl. 31, and Ps. 27 throughout.)

"I have heard that there is a great inclination among some of the Indians above Susquehannah to receive the gospel, though at that place I hear they are much prejudiced, and very surly. John M——, the Moravian preacher, has been in all those parts, and, as he tells me, (I saw him last week,) has strangely got into the hearts of the Indians. But, by the way, I fear he is not sound in his principles. He would not talk very plain; but so far as I could learn, he seemed to hold universal redemption, free will, and that the essence of faith is a confident persuasion or assurance of Christ's love; and *he seemed to be more taken with the blood and wounds of Christ* than with *Christ himself;* and seemed to talk as if a *law-work* was not very needful, but that all sinners have to do is to *believe.* But yet I might misunderstand him. I could not but hope he is a Christian; and yet he talks just as other Moravians did, that I saw at New York. But the truth is, the Moravians puzzle me more than any people I ever met with.

"But, dear brother, *our* sentiments of religion in the main must be right. Dear Mr. Shepherd, on the parable [of the ten virgins], is with us in every point; but if you would be firmly settled, read the Psalms of David. He had all the very same feelings. But Jonah did not feel just as David did, and yet Jonah was a believer. Yet sometimes I am ready to turn sceptic, and you atheist, deist, and every thing that is bad; and then, again, *my heart is sweetly settled.* You will never forget to pray for me.

"In general, I have had a sweet winter — loose from the world — had clearness and freedom in writing; yet many times I have been so deserted for many days together, that I wonder I should ever pretend to write, and am almost ready to conclude I'll never more put pen to paper. And now, for above this week, I have not been able to write: all ideas are gone or confused, and I am quite good for nothing. By all, I am more convinced that God works both to will and to do, and *that* from no motive but merely his good pleasure. And yet we must work; and in that way the Lord Jesus Christ will meet his people, (Is. xl. 31, and John xiv. 21,) but merely for his own sake.

"People come in and interrupt me, and the bearer grows impatient, and therefore I must omit many things. . . . Do send me word when you think to be at New England again, and what you have done with my books. Give my love and duty to Mr. Pemberton and madam, Mr. Dickinson, and Mr. Burr, and tell Mr. B. I would have written to him, but that the bearer cannot wait. . . . May God always be with us, and teach us, and humble us, and bring us to his kingdom at last. I love you dearly in the Lord Jesus. Dear brother, farewell.

"JOSEPH BELLAMY.

"P. S. All our Christians love you dearly. The Lord's design is for us to live, not on his interests rising, or on his children, or on inherent grace, or on any thing else that is not God, but to live merely on God alone. Dear brother, farewell! The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, be with you forever and ever. Amen and Amen! "J. B."

In 1744, Mr. Bellamy intended to have prepared an account of the revival of the few preceding years in Bethlem and other places, so far as he had witnessed or had part in it, for Prince's "Christian History;" and at the request of Blair, Finley, and others, he seems also to have contemplated a preaching tour to parts of Pennsylvania and Virginia; but in neither case were his plans fulfilled. In this and several following years, also, numerous letters were addressed to him, asking advice and counsel, or requesting him to preach in various places. In 1747, for example, he was invited to quite a number of parishes in Connecticut; and in the same year, Edwards writes to him, "I hope you will think of what talk we had of your taking a journey in the fall for the interests of religion." But declining many, if not most, of such requests,* he confined himself almost entirely to the duties of his par-

* Writing to Wheelock in reference to one such application, he says, "My going *will do no good, and I had better be in my study.*" See, also, p. of this Memoir.

ish, and to the preparation of his great work, "True Religion Delineated," which was published in 1750.* This work, which soon had an extensive circulation, greatly increased his reputation and influence, and at once established his character as a thorough, discriminating student, and a sound and able divine.

About this time, Mr. Bellamy became the correspondent of Dr. Rogers, of New York, and of the celebrated Samuel (afterward President) Davies; and one or two extracts from their letters will show the esteem in which, at this period, he was held, not only in New England, but in the remoter colonies. When Edwards was about leaving Northampton, he was urgently called to Virginia; and in a letter which Davies writes to Bellamy on the subject,† he says, "I never received an information of the kind in my life, that afforded me so many anxious thoughts, as yours concerning the great Mr. Edwards. . . . I assure myself, my dear sir, of your zealous concurrence to persuade him to Virginia. Do not send him a cold paper message, but go to him yourself in person. Of all the men I know in America, he appears to me the most fit for this place; and if he could be obtained on no other consideration, I would cheerfully resign him my place, and cast myself into the wide world once more. . . . We need the deep judgment and calm temper of Mr. Edwards among us. Even the dissenters here have the nicest taste of almost any congregation I know, and can't put up with even the truths of the gospel in an injudicious form. The enemies are watchful, and raise a prodigious clamor about raving, injudicious preaching. Mr. Edwards would suit them both. Our liberties, too, are precarious, and methods are used to restrain them. There is nobody here, who is known in Great Britain, whose representations might have some weight to counterbalance that of the council; and on this account we extremely need Mr. Edwards, whose character there, especially in Scotland, would have considerable influence. . . . Dear sir, if Mr. Edwards fails, *shall I prevail with you to come yourself?* O, how it would rejoice my soul to see you!" And in a later letter,‡ he

* To aid him in the preparation of this work, we find Edwards sending him, from Northampton, Van Mastricht and Turretin. (The identical copy of the former is now in the possession of the writer.) And as possibly showing the channel of his studies, in this and the few following years, we find him sending to his friend and correspondent, Dr. Erskine, of Edinburgh, for works on the "nature and obligation of virtue;" on "God's moral government of rewards and punishments;" on "the imputation of Adam's sin;" on "the person of Christ;" on "the future punishment of the wicked," etc.

† MS. letter of Davies, July 4, 1751.

‡ MS. letter of July 13, 1751.

says, "The people seem eager for him [Mr. E.] above all men on earth. . . . *You*, or Mr. E., are the only men they could make an implicit venture upon. I am, with the warmest emotions of heart, your most affectionate brother, S. Davies." As to his work, Finley writes to him,* "I have read a good deal of your Delineations of true religion, with which I have been much pleased and edified. I thank God, who has enabled you, my dear brother, to write that piece; and I thank you also." And again Davies says,† "Your book, sir, has been blest to sundry in Virginia; and I wish your life may long be preserved to perform many such important services for the church of God." About this time we find Mr. Bellamy opening a correspondence with "that pious Enoch,"(as Davies calls him,) Rev. J. Davenport, and both agreeing, "at stated seasons, to be mindful of each other at the throne of grace."

The following letter was addressed by Mr. Bellamy, to Mrs. Esther Burr, a daughter of President Edwards, soon after her marriage to Aaron Burr, then president of the College of New Jersey. It contrasts strongly with some modern epistles on similar occasions. There is nothing trifling or merely complimentary about it. It is a message of pious congratulation, and a serious exhortation to act well her part in the distinguished sphere in which Providence had placed her.

"Bethlem, Ct., *Aug.* 22, 1752.

"Madam: Such assurances have you of my sincere and fervent friendship, that you will readily imagine how joyfully I congratulate your late happy marriage to the Rev. President Burr. I will, therefore, only put you in mind of what you doubtless often think of, how God has prepared you by affliction, trials, and changes in Egypt and in the wilderness, for your present station in so delightful a land. Beware, therefore, that you do not forget the Lord thy God. O, think with what piety and devotion your godly parents gave you to God in baptism; how they have prayed for you; how they have counselled you; what an example they have set before you; what a good profession you have made. O, think what God and the world will now expect from you, a professor of religion, and the daughter of such pious parents, and now standing in such a place! O that you might have wisdom and grace to act a noble and pious part; to live above the world; to maintain communion with God; to set a good example; to prepare for unforeseen calamities! I shall now hereafter see you but a few more times in this world; I can't think of it without grief. But I hope to live with you forever in heaven.

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* MS. letter of July 3, 1752. † MS. letter of Sept. 29, 1752.

"I should make you a visit next commencement, but that a consociation is appointed to meet at my house at that time. I design you a visit as soon as circumstances will admit. In the mean time, let me have your friendship and your prayers.

"Madam, I am your affectionate friend

"And humble servant,

"JOSEPH BELLAMY.

"To Mrs. Esther Burr."

The year 1754 was marked by an important event in the life of Mr. Bellamy — the invitation he received to become pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in the city of New York. The congregation there, being partly Scotch and partly English, had long been divided in feeling on various subjects, especially on the question of psalmody;* and the result was, that both its pastors (Rev. Messrs. Cumming and Pemberton) successively resigned their charge in 1753, Mr. Cumming going to the "Old South," and Mr. Pemberton to the "New Brick," church in Boston. In his preaching tour in 1742, Mr. Bellamy had been heard with deep interest by some of the congregation, and was now strongly recommended to them by several ministers in the vicinity. He was accordingly addressed by the society's committee, who requested him "to come and preach a few sermons," and to aid them "by his counsel and advice;" and the motive was held out, that there was "an undoubted prospect of his being instrumental in healing their breaches, and uniting the congregation." He was also written to by Mr. Pemberton, one of the late pastors, who urged the same request in the most kind and friendly spirit. Thus appealed to, he visited New York, and preached, as had been desired. A strong impression was made, both by his counsels and preaching; and on the 31st of December, (a day set apart for solemn fasting and prayer for the divine direction,) the church voted "to call Mr. Bellamy as their pastor." The society, by their committee, write, "that they all heartily agree to said call," and that they believe his compliance "is absolutely necessary for the good of the church." On the 9th of January, 1754, the presbytery, at their meeting at Elizabeth Town, having heard the representations of the church and congregation, voted, "that they concur in their desire and choice." They further wrote to Mr. Bellamy, and also to the consociation of which he was a member, urging the importance of the call and of his acceptance; and suggesting, if the way should not seem clear at once to dismiss him, that the

* For a full account of these difficulties, see the Life of Rev. Dr. Rogers, by Rev. Dr. Miller, of Princeton, N. J.

consociation "would allow and request him to visit New York for some time, which might more fully satisfy" his brethren and himself "of the necessity of his removal." The consociation met, and heard the request of the New York church, and also the following letter from Mr. Bellamy:—

"BETHLEM, *Jan.* 23, 1754.

"REV. MESSRS. A. STODDARD, etc., etc., called to give advice in the affair before us.

"REVEREND GENTLEMEN: My people give me salary enough; are very kind to me. I love them; and if it be the will of God, I should love to live and die with them. There are many difficulties in the way of my going to New York. They are a difficult people; don't like my terms of communion; and some of their great men are against my coming. I am not polite enough for them! I may possibly do to be minister out in the woods, but am not fit for a city. I may die with the small-pox, and leave a widow and fatherless children in a helpless condition. My people will be in danger of ruin. It breaks my heart to think that the interests of religion must sink among my people, and the youth run riot, and the little children be left without an instructor. I humbly desire, therefore, nothing may be done without the utmost deliberation; and that whatever advice you shall see fit to give me, you would let me and my people know what grounds you go upon. Behold my life, and all the comforts of my life, and my usefulness in the world, and the temporal and eternal interests of my people, lie at stake; and you, reverend gentlemen, must answer it to God, if you should give me any wrong advice for want of a thorough and most solemn and impartial weighing of the affair. May the infinitely wise God direct you. I pray you to consider me as one of your unworthy brethren, almost overwhelmed with concern, and just ready to sink under the weight of this affair, and quite broken hearted, for my kind and dear people.

"JOSEPH BELLAMY."

The call on the part of the New York church, as this letter intimates, was not unanimous. One of its prominent members had written to Mr. Bellamy, (Jan. 9,) frankly saying, "Many persons of importance are opposed to the choice in your favor, and cannot acquiesce in it." And the reasons he gives are, "Some of them have been used to a modulation of voice, and a propriety of method, and refinement of language, they think you deficient in;" and "others think you don't preach so free and generous a gospel as we have been used to, and as is agree-

ble to us." * He also states to Mr. B., that "many who are in his favor, are so because they like his [supposed] sentiments as to church communion; adding, that if his views are like those of Mr. Edwards, his coming "will infallibly make the rent in the church wider than it is, . . . as the bulk of the people are against that sentiment."

On the other hand, Mr. Bellamy was strongly urged to accept the call, by such men as Burr, Finley, Rogers, and by a large majority of the church and congregation. In these circumstances, the consociation, adopting the suggestion of the presbytery already referred to, advised him to go to New York, and there judge for himself as to the path of duty. He did so; and the journal, which he kept at the time, shows he remained there six weeks, preaching frequently to large audiences, and as far as possible becoming acquainted with the people. He was the means of reconciling all their difficulties; and he records that he "never saw a people, for the body of them, more ready to receive instruction, and to be brought to a reformation." He preached with the utmost plainness on all the great questions of the day, about which there had been division among them; and his record is, "The people now know my opinions touching the most tender points — family prayer, keeping the Sabbath, terms of communion, church discipline, the religious education of children, etc.; and the more strict I preach, the more they are pleased, and commend my preaching, and in private conversation manifest a great forwardness to be reformed, and to resign themselves and their children to be led and directed in the way of their duty." Notwithstanding these indications, however, he did not feel it his duty to remain permanently in New York, and before leaving the city, addressed the following note "To the Elders and Deacons of the Presbyterian Church in New York, and to the Trustees of the Congregation:" —

"GENTLEMEN. I have, agreeably to the advice given me by the consociation to which I belong, been with you these six Sabbaths, and been at pains to get all the light I can; and upon my return, must represent to them the true state of things in your congregation, and give my opinion on some points. As to your state, besides the many difficulties I should expect to meet with if you were ever so well united, from the different parties and tempers subsisting, I learn that there are at least ten families opposed to my settlement; whereas, among my people at Bethlem, every family in the society is united in me. I cannot, therefore, think, as things stand, it

* The writer admits, however, that almost all these persons were among the *irreligious*.

will be for the honor of God, and the general interest of religion, for me to be removed; and I think it my duty to make this declaration to the council on my return. The consequence will be, no doubt, that if you make an attempt, you will be disappointed. Now, therefore, as becomes an honest man, I tell you my mind, to prevent your being at any further trouble in the affair. Heartily wishing you may find a man in whom you may all be united, and under whose ministry your congregation may prosper, I am your humble servant,

"J. BELLAMY."

On the reassembling of the consociation, however, notwithstanding this letter, a delegation from the New York congregation appeared, and urged Mr. Bellamy's dismission, that he might accept their call, on various grounds; such, for example, as the importance of the position, and his fitness for it, as shown by "his wise, judicious, and happy measures for healing their divisions as to church order and government," and the excellence of his preaching, which "had united them, almost to a man, in their choice of him as their minister." On the other hand, the people of Bethlem strongly opposed the dismission; and the following letter was sent by himself to the council: —

"*March* 22, 1754.

"To the Reverend Consociation convened in Bethlem, March 25, 1754.

"REVEREND AND BELOVED: My people give me a sufficient support; are very friendly to me. I am under great advantages to do good among them, and am abundantly well pleased with my present situation. I have constantly made this representation to the gentlemen from New York, from their very first proposing my removal from my people, and have been continually representing the great difficulties in the way of such an attempt. Nevertheless, they are still resolute, pleading they are undone if they fail of success. Now, what I have to offer is as follows: 1. I cannot apprehend it to be right to remove a minister from a people, where both are well agreed, unless in case of great necessity. Nor, 2. Can I think a minister is obliged to part with all the delights of a peaceable and quiet life, to be put at the head of a congregation attended with so many difficulties, unless there is a rational prospect of doing so much good to the souls of men, and to the interests of religion, as makes it a duty to practise all the self-denial the case calls for. Nor, 3. Can I be willing to go myself, and take my family into the way of the small-pox, as in the present case, unless the affair be so circumstanced that the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom makes it my duty.

"I am sensible the people of New York plead that a great congregation

lies at stake; and, if they are ruined through my backwardness to go, they are ready to say, 'I must answer for it.' And ministers, in those parts, by letters urge and press it upon my conscience, in the most solemn and affectionate manner, as matter of indispensable duty.

"To all which I reply, that if it does appear to be my indispensable duty to remove to New York, there is no more to be said: the will of the Lord be done. I ought to go, notwithstanding all selfish considerations to the contrary. But if it does not appear to be my indispensable duty, it cannot in reason be desired, nor can I by any means consent to it. This, therefore, is the point to be judged and decided by this venerable consociation, whether it be matter of indispensable duty that I should be removed to New York. I would only take leave to add, that I humbly conceive this cannot be made out, unless it be made to appear, 1. That it is necessary that some settled minister or other be removed to supply them; for if this be not needful, it cannot be my duty to go. 2. That there is no other that can be proposed to be had, that may answer as well or better, and be removed with as little or less difficulty; for if another will do as well, and could be removed with less difficulty, I ought to be excused. 3. That there is a prevailing probability that my removal would, all things considered, be for the general good; that it would prevent more evil there than it would occasion here, and do more good there than might be done here.

" And since this is an affair attended with so many difficulties, and of such vast importance, I humbly request that it may be most maturely weighed, and then decided on such scriptural and rational grounds as may be satisfactory to me and my people, and the churches in this county, if I should be ordered to go; and to New York Presbytery and the presbyterian church and congregation in that city, if I am ordered not to go. And so I submit the affair to your judgments, and resign myself into the hands of God, to be disposed of as he shall overrule and order.

"JOSEPH BELLAMY."

After full and prayerful examination of all the facts of the case, the consociation declined to dismiss Mr. Bellamy. This result was doubtless communicated officially to the New York congregation. It was also the occasion of the following letter from Mr. Bellamy to a prominent member of that congregation: —

Dear Sir: It has turned out as I told you it would. I did not mean to compliment. I never could see it my duty to remove to New York, or be persuaded I should ever do so much for the interests of Christ's kingdom there as I may in these parts. The matter is now decided.

You are to see my face no more, unless it be by some accidental visit. Take the following hints, therefore, from one sincerely concerned for your interest and welfare, and who is tenderly affected with a sense of the sorrow which will fill your hearts at the news of these ill tidings.

"Mr. H. and Capt. J. are not to blame: they have sincerely done their utmost. I am not to blame: I have acted honestly, in the fear of God. Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it? Be humbled, therefore, under the mighty hand of God. Spend whole hours prostrate before him in tears and fervent prayers. He alone can help you. Believe it, God governs the world. Break not among yourselves. Stand firm to the truth; be calm; be wise; take advice of godly ministers, of the presbytery, of the synod; stand steady; don't despair; persevere; don't go to the baptists; divide not into two congregations. You'll at last find a minister to your mind. If you break among yourselves, you are undone, and religion is ruined. Hearken to the advice of your friend. May Heaven protect you! May the great Shepherd of Israel give you a pastor after his own heart. So wishes, so prays,

"Your humble servant,

"JOSEPH BELLAMY."

"To Mr. John Smith."

So strong, however, was the hold Mr. Bellamy had gained on the affection of the great body of the New York congregation, and so devoted their attachment to him, that they could not rest satisfied with his refusal, the chief effect of which seems to have been, more to unite them among themselves, and in their desire that he should become their minister. Accordingly the call was soon renewed, and its acceptance urged by letter after letter, and argument on argument, from all classes in the congregation, as well as by the presbytery collectively, and some of its prominent members as individuals. One correspondent writes him, that the first sermon he preached at the time of his visit, "was the means of breaking up a club of infidels," while a second "led a prayerless person to set up the worship of God in his family;" another, that, through his labors, "Deists had been brought under conviction, secure sinners awakened, and a universal concern kindled, not only" in the congregation, but "in sundry of the Dutch, French, and English churches, who have promised to come and join our congregation, if you should come here;" while still another represents, "that the opposition to Mr. Bellamy has changed its nature, and, instead of being a bar in his way, is now a strong motive to his acceptance, as it is, in fact, an opposition to the great doctrines of the gospel that he preaches; so that his labors to establish truth and confute error are now more needful than

ever." Under the pressure of these appeals, the consociation was again called together, and, the case being fully considered, they agreed "to dismiss Mr. Bellamy, provided his church and congregation would consent to his removal." This, however, his people utterly refused to do; and in consequence, the consociation voted, "that they could not see it for the glory of God and the interest of religion to dismiss Mr. Bellamy;" and he wrote as follows to the chairman of the New York committee:—

"*July* 18, 1754.

"SIR: Last week my people had their meeting, and declared in their vote, that they did not think it their duty to consent to my removal to New York. And thus, at last, *the affair is brought to a final issue.* Now may God, of his infinite mercy, send you a pastor after his own heart, in whom you may unite; for without union no success can be expected. Want of union among yourselves has embarrassed the late attempt from the very first, and been the principal cause of your disappointment. Had *you* been united, I believe my people would have consented. Never think of settling a minister among you, till you are better united. In haste, from your humble servant,

"J. BELLAMY."

"P. S. Want of union disheartened me before I had been in New York ten days; disheartened the ministers below in their process; disheartened our council; disheartened my people; and procures the final answer in the negative."

This second failure of their call was a severe stroke to the majority of the New York congregation. Some of them wrote to Mr. B. in terms of reproach, some in the spirit of deep affliction, and all urging him yet to leave his people at Bethlem and come to New York. To most of these writers he replied calmly, stating, as he had before done, the grounds of his decision. To one, however, to whom he seems to have spoken in the freedom of friendship, he says,—

"Some may wonder at my backwardness to come to New York, and even doubt my integrity. But you know better. You have seen the anguish of my heart, and my conscientious concern to do what is right. I never thought I was fit for New York. I never saw my way clear to remove. If I could, rather than your distracted congregation should go to ruin, I would be willing to venture, and trust myself in the hands of an all-sufficient God, who, when I am weak, can make me strong, and can take care of me wherever I be. But O that God would send you a man that is fit for you! O that the congregation would be humbled under the mighty hand of God, in this day of their trial! O that they would

keep, every one, his mouth as with a bridle, and remember that as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so Christ opened not his mouth in the midst of all his sufferings! I will not cease to pray for you, and ever remain, your friend, J. B."

The matter which has thus at (perhaps disproportionate) length been presented, was one of deep perplexity and sore trial to Mr. Bellamy, as his numerous letters and memoranda * on the subject show; but, in the end, the way of duty was made plain; all seemed satisfied that he acted conscientiously, and in the fear of God; and his character and influence were more than ever established among his own people, and through New England. Letters, however, were still sent from New York, some asking his counsel in behalf of the congregation, and some still urging, hopeless as the case seemed, that he should yet become their pastor. In reply to one of the former class, he strongly recommends that they call Mr. Edwards from Stockbridge, saying that he would "unite the people to a man," and make their "congregation one of the most flourishing in America;" † and in answer to one of the latter he writes as follows, apparently his last letter on the subject: —

"Bethl m, *January* 1, 1755.

"Dear ———: In answer to yours of the 18th December, take these hints. . . . I do not intend to set my foot in New York till they have a minister settled, and you may tell them so. . . . To hear you are

* One characteristic memorandum, in his handwriting, is an imaginary dialogue on the subject of his "*declaring*," as it was technically called, i. e., saying he felt it his duty to go to New York. Coming, at length, to the supposition that he *has* "declared," he writes, —

"The news flies through the country, and through all New England, and spreads far and wide; and every one has his say — nor are they silent in hell!

"*Carnal People.* — Aha! Aha! Here's the man that pretended to so much religion! They are all alike — a pack of rogues!

"*Godly People.* — Alas! Alas! What has he done? A dreadful affair! We must give him up, without pretending to vindicate his conduct! Alas for him that was once our guide and friend!

"*New York.* — Aha! Aha! He cares not for his people, nor is moved by their tears, nor touched by their cries and pleadings! He has torn away! Right or wrong, he's resolved to come, though his church is ruined! Aha! Aha! Dollars! Dollars!! Dollars!!!

"*The Devil.* — Hurrah! I'm right glad! Now the old fellow will never do much more hurt to my kingdom!

"*All Hell.* — Hurrah! Hurrah!!"

† He intimates that Mr. Edwards "is not so florid a preacher" as himself; but adds, that "he is, by many good judges, esteemed, on the whole, the best preacher in America."

well settled, will give me the same joy a tender parent feels on the recovery of a sick child from the sides of the grave. Once I thought God called me to put my life in my hand, and try to save you from ruin; and I acted accordingly in the integrity of my heart. But God, in his providence, has released me from the dangerous work. I pity you under the frowns of Heaven. I bless God my people feel kind to me, and all that has happened has not hurt my influence in this part of the country, in the least. God grant you a man ten times as fit as I am; and if it be his holy will, grant me to die in peace, retired here in quiet from the noise of a mistaken world. Your sincere friend, and humble servant,

"J. BELLAMY.

"P. S. I don't believe it is, or ever will be, my duty to remove and settle at New York; and is it not best I should tell you plainly? I do not want courting, and to have a poor distressed people beg and pray. It almost breaks my heart. The Lord have mercy on you. Just as I feel, just so I write. I hate dissimulation. Expect no more letters from me. The laws of friendship do not, I think, oblige me to write.

"J. B."

The New York matter being fully and finally settled, Mr. Bellamy seems to have given himself, with renewed earnestness, to his favorite studies, and to the duties of his quiet parish, as to which he writes, "Though all the world is in a bustle, here I am, alone, still, and happy." At this time, in consequence of the ill success of the British arms in the campaign of '56, the danger of the frontiers became great, and Mr. Bellamy, being anxious for the personal safety of his friend Mr. Edwards, at Stockbridge, sent him the following kind invitation, which gives, incidentally, a glance at his own pursuits: —

"Bethlem, *May* 31, 1756.

"Dear Sir: I am in pain, fearing our army against Crown Point will be defeated. God only knows how it will be. Your own discretion will make you sufficiently speedy to secure yourself and family. We stand as ready to receive you, and any of your family, to all the comforts our house affords, as if you were our children. I am greatly interested for your safety. I am concerned for Mr. Hawley. I fear he will be too venturesome, and fling away his life for nothing. . . . The Indian boys* grow more and more easy and content; but they love play too well, are very ignorant, and very stupid as to the things of religion; and in arithmetic, when I would teach them any thing that is a little difficult,

* Referring to some Indian boys sent from Stockbridge to be taught in his family.

they are soon discouraged, and don't love to try; so I take them off, and put them to writing again, designing by little and little to get them along. They will not endure hardship, and bend their minds to business, like English boys. It seems they were never taught their Catechism. Shall I teach it? I have got three Bibles; but have not yet given them to the boys, they are so ignorant. I expect you will give me any instructions you think proper; and remain, reverend sir, your unworthy friend and servant,

"J. BELLAMY.

"Rev. J. Edwards."

A sermon he had preached on some public occasion, early in 1763, being misunderstood, drew forth several letters of objection or inquiry, to which the following are some of his replies: —

"Bethlem, *Feb.* 15, 1763.

"Rev. Sir: I thank you for your letter, and am of opinion you do not understand me; for I said nothing in my sermon but what I say in my printed essay. . . The occasion of the misunderstanding is this: the word *repentance* is used in a *larger*, and in a *more limited* sense, in Scripture and by divines in general.

"1. Repentance is sometimes used in a large sense, so as to imply faith in Christ in its nature, (as Acts iii. 19;) for otherwise pardon could not be promised to it. Now, to say that repentance, in this sense of the word, is before faith, is as absurd, in my opinion, as to say, that faith is before faith. And this is what you imagine I hold. But you are mistaken. I never had such a thought.

"2. Repentance is sometimes used in a limited sense, in distinction from faith in Christ, (as Acts xx. 21;) and then the inspired writers are wont to place it before faith, (Mark i. 15. Acts xix. 4. Acts xx. 21,) because, as I apprehend, a sense of the evil nature and ill desert of sin as against God, takes place, I do not say in order of *time*, but only in order of *nature*, before looking to free grace through Jesus Christ for mercy. So the Assembly of Divines state it, (Conf. of Faith, chap. xv.) So Mr. Edwards states it, (Religious Affections, p. 191.) So I state it, (Essay, p. 159.)

"Old Mr. G—— had heard of my sermon, and was quite as uneasy as you are; but no sooner did he understand me, (for we talked over the subject together,) than he said, *All Calvinists understand it as I do.* And could I see you, in one half hour you would, I trust, be perfectly easy. Mr. Croswell has printed against me for holding that *repentance is implied in faith, and is before forgiveness.* I have sent an answer to the press. My controversy is not with you, but with the Antinomians.

They all hold that we are forgiven before repentance. Perhaps I did not express myself as accurately in my sermon as I ought; but in my Essay, which contains my real sentiments, I have taken great care in my expressions. And you like my Essay, it seems. If so, we do not differ; and is it not a pity to enter into controversy, if we do not differ? Would not Satan be glad? And would not good people be grieved?

"I am your brother,

"J. BELLAMY."*

"To Rev. Mr. Lee."

To another, whose conduct, in reference to the same sermon, had been, as he believed, both uncourteous and unchristian, he writes:—

"Rev. Sir: Suppose you should, after many kind invitations, preach in my pulpit, and be with me two or three days, and I manifest no dislike, but praise your preaching to your face, and yet, as soon as your back was turned, talk and preach against your sermon, fill the country with the noise, and then ride through your parish, time after time, and not call and see you. Suppose such a case. *Query* 1. What would you think? *Query* 2. What would the world think, should they know the whole truth? *Query* 3. What ought a Christian, the disciple of Jesus, to do in such a case? Did I know my duty, by the grace of God, I would do it. If I have preached wrong, I am ready to retract. If I have injured you, I am ready to beg your pardon, and amend. But if all arises only from your misunderstanding me, *is it not a pity?* O my brother, do consider the case. Give me a kind answer. Tell me my duty, and you will greatly oblige yours,

"J. BELLAMY."

In circumstances kindred to those above alluded to, though at a different date, we find him sketching the following outline, apparently for publication in some periodical of the day:—

"John viii. 48. *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?* Note,—

"1. The Jews, God's peculiar people, were wont to call our blessed Savior by that most odious, detestable name, 'a Samaritan.'

"2. They knew he was not a Samaritan, in profession or practice, but the contrary. Christ was free to declare that salvation was of the Jews,

* Among Dr. B.'s manuscripts are several other letters on the same subject, and of about the same date. In one of these, referring to Edwards on the Affections, p. 191, he says, "Observe the arrangement: 'God glorious' — 'the evil nature and ill desert of sin' — 'the need of Christ and his atonement,' etc. *Question*: Is this arrangement agreeable to Scripture and reason? To answer this question directly, is to answer the whole I have in view."

and that the Samaritans knew not what they worshipped; nor did he ever go to worship in their mountain, but constantly attended worship at Jerusalem, according to the law of Moses.

"3. Was it not, then, out of mere malice, and to blacken his character, that the Jews called Jesus Christ a Samaritan?

"4. Yet they justified themselves in their conduct. 'Say we not *well* thou art a Samaritan?'

"*Doctrine I.* Angry men are apt to call their neighbors by bad names.

"*Doctrine II.* The passions justify themselves.

"These two doctrines neither need to be explained or proved; nor are there any objections against them to be answered. Nothing remains, therefore, but the application.

"1. The Savoy confession of faith and heads of agreement, the Westminster confession of faith and catechisms, are acknowledged, by our churches, to contain a system of religion agreeable to the word of God.

"2. To call those who preach this system Sandemeans, is as absurd and inconsistent in us, as it was in the Jews to call Christ a Samaritan; because they preach that system which is acknowledged to be orthodox, just as Christ did when he preached that religion which was taught by Moses and the prophets.

"3. We all know that these confessions and catechisms declare,—

"(1.) That there are but two covenants, one or other of which all mankind are under — the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace.

"(2.) That sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace.

"(3.) That none are to be admitted, etc., but those who profess a cordial subjection to Christ.

"(4.) That the unregenerate 'are utterly indisposed, disabled, and opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.'

"(5.) That the law of God requires perfect holiness, and forbids all sin.

"(6.) That works done by unregenerate men are sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God.

"(7.) That the word, sacraments, and prayer, which are the external means of salvation, ought to be attended in a holy manner, by all who attend them.

"(8.) 'Man, having brought himself into this woful condition, is neither able to help himself, nor willing to be helped by God out of it, but rather inclined to lie still, insensible in it, till he perish.'

"4. We all know that these are the very doctrines preached up by those ministers, whom some endeavor to blacken by calling them by that odious name, 'Sandemeans.'

"5. We all know that these very ministers are professed enemies to

Sandemeanism, and professedly and practically adhere to the confession, etc., and catechisms, and contend earnestly for the faith as held forth in them.

"6. Therefore to call these ministers by that bad name, and to justify ourselves in it, is to imitate the Jews, who treated Christ Jesus in the same manner. '*Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*'

"7. To deny the perfection of the divine law, and total depravity, and so sap the foundation of the only true scheme of religion, and to stigmatize those as heretics who adhere to the truth, is to do as the Jews did, who first denied the true sense of Moses' law, and then called Christ a Samaritan for adhering to it.

"*Objection* 1. But these wicked ministers say, that the unregenerate ought not to be exhorted to do any duty in an unholy manner; to hear the word in a disposition to hate and reject it; but in a disposition to love, believe, and practise it: or to pray in an impenitent, self-righteous manner, but in a penitent manner, and in the name of Christ.

"*Answer.* In all this they perfectly agree with the confessions of faith and catechisms.

"*Objection* 2. They say the impenitent ought not to do any duty, to read, hear, pray, &c.

"*Answer.* This is notoriously false; for we all know that they say, the precepts of the law, and the exhortations of the gospel, are, in fact, binding on sinners as well as saints — on the unregenerate as well as the regenerate — that it is as much the duty of the unregenerate to hear the word, and pray, as it is of the regenerate.

"*Objection* 3. According to them, sinners are less guilty, and in less danger, if they neglect to hear the word, and pray, than in hearing and praying in an unholy manner.

"*Answer.* This is false. They all say it is more wicked to refuse to hear the truth at all, than it is to hear it in an unholy manner; more wicked to refuse to cry to God for mercy at all, than to cry with an unholy heart. And they all say there is more hope of salvation in a way of attendance on means, than in the contrary way, — yea, that there is no hope of salvation, ordinarily, but in a way of attendance on means.

"*Objection* 4. But they say that sinners, under deep conviction, increase in guilt more than the secure.

"*Answer.* Their guilt is increased, say they, by obstinate impenitence under great light. And yet, trying to stifle conviction upon design, by renouncing all means, is viler than trying to promote conviction by the

use of means, although the heart still remains obstinately impenitent, as all allow.

"J. B.

"To the Rev. Mr. A——."

To a correspondent, who had written to ask him, "What is the nature of virtue?" he replied as follows: —

"Bethlem, *Oct.* 20, 1764.

"Dear Sir: *Love* is the sum of all virtue — love to being in general, to God the great Being, and to all other beings in due proportion, those only excepted who stand excommunicated by the great Judge of all, as irreclaimable enemies to God, and to all good. Our neighbors, although our personal enemies, are to be loved as ourselves, for they are our flesh and blood, as good by nature as we, and as capable and desirous of happiness. Their faults we are never to speak of, unless in duty we are called to it. Though they belie us, we are to return good for evil, blessing for cursing. The example of God, and of his Son, ought always to fill our minds, and be our pattern; but the ways of the world we are not to imitate. There is more pleasure in it, and it is a more gentlemanlike thing to be like God, than like the devil. This is the sum of the matter.

"J. BELLAMY."

The same views in substance are more fully set forth in the following "*theses*," which seem to have been drawn up for the use of one of his students: —

"Bethlem, *April* 6, 1766.

"Mr. Punderson Austin:

"*Sir* —1. The whole of virtue consists in conformity to the divine law.

"2. Love is the sum of the virtue required in the divine law. (Matt. xxii. 40.)

"3. Benevolence, complacence, gratitude, are the whole of love.

"4. The object of benevolence is being; of complacence, virtue; of gratitude, a benefactor.

"5. The divine law is a transcript of the divine nature. Therefore,—

"6. Love is the sum of virtue in God as well as in the creature. And,—

"7. Virtue in God and in the creature is of the same kind. And so,—

"8. A clear idea of God's character is attainable by a virtuous creature.

"9. If virtue in God is specifically different from virtue in man, God's moral character cannot be ascertained: no man can show what holiness in God is.

"10. Justice and truth have no virtue in them, nor the highest acts of generosity and self-denial, without love. 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

"*Question.* What is the primary object of the first virtuous exercise in the ideal world? — to use Norris's phrase.

"*Answer* 1. Not gratitude — for the idea of a benefactor is prior to the idea of gratitude.

"2. Not complacence in virtue, in idea — for in the ideal world, the idea of virtue, is prior to the idea of complacence in virtue.

"3. Being, simply considered, is the first idea; universal union and benevolence the second. See Edwards's Nature of Virtue, p. 119.

"*Objection* 1. An idea of the eternal fitness of things is the primary object of the divine complacence. *Answer.* Words without ideas are the source of confusion. If by *things* is meant beings — if by *fitness*, the suitableness of universal love and harmony among beings — the sense is plain. But the objection is vain; for benevolence to being in general, causes universal love and harmony to appear suitable, amiable, and a proper object of complacence to the divine mind.

"*Objection* 2. This scheme makes the good of being in general the chief good. *Answer.* It does; and the good of being in general is, in fact, the chief good, and the sum of all good — even as to love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, is the sum of all virtue, and the very image of the divine virtue.

"*Objection* 3. But this supposes natural good more excellent than moral good, as the worth of natural good is the sole cause or ground of the excellency of moral good. *Answer.* The good of being in general, which is the object of benevolence, is not the partial, but the complete good of being in general, comprising all the good being is capable of, by whatever name called, — natural, moral, spiritual; joy, honor, glory, etc., — than which there is nothing of greater worth in the universe. Nay, 'tis the sum of ALL GOOD.

"*Objection* 4. Natural good or happiness is a distinct thing from holiness, and they ought not to be confounded. *Answer.* Holiness is love to God. Happiness is joy in God. But to love, and to rejoice in God, are both equally of a holy nature. To say that the happiness of heaven is not of a holy nature, is infinitely to degrade it, or rather to set it wholly aside, and substitute in its room another thing totally diverse.

"*Objection* 5. How can God aim at his own good, since his own good is already complete; his holiness, his glory, his honor, his happiness, etc., all complete? *Answer.* This objection has no more weight against *this* scheme, than against the common one of God's aiming at his own glory. See Edwards, p. 32, etc.

"The occasion of the objections against Edwards's scheme is not well understanding him. He wrote especially against the views of Hutchinson. They ought to be read first, and Dr. Brown's answer to the '*Characteristics*' of Lord Shaftesbury. Or only read Shaftesbury's Characteristics, (which contain the fundamental sentiments which Mr. Edwards designed to oppose,) and enter thoroughly into it. Then read Edwards on the Affections; then Edwards on Virtue, and God's last end, and be at pains to understand the controversy. Then state your objections, if you have any, and they shall have the best answer that can be given, by your sincere friend and humble servant,

"J. BELLAMY."

The following letter "on creeds, etc.," endorsed, "To a friend," is without date, but appears, from the handwriting, to have been penned in the same year with the above letter — 1766.

"REV. SIR: You ask me, 'Of what use are creeds, confessions, and catechisms, among the disciples of Christ, who call no man "master" on earth, and acknowledge no infallible standard of truth but the Bible?' I answer, —

"1. You will readily own that the disciples of Christ ought to love one another as brethren, and be cordially united in promoting the religion of their Master, in their several stations. And to this end, —

"2. You will readily own that, like honest men and brethren, they ought to be quite ready to let their religious sentiments be known to one another, and to the world, without any disguise.

"3. And you will readily own, if there are false brethren crept into the church, who, though they profess to believe the Bible to be the word of God, yet are industriously propagating a new scheme of principles, subversive of true Christianity, in a clandestine manner, — that, in this case, a mere profession that they believe the Bible to be the word of God, is no evidence that they do not understand it in a sense agreeable to their own new scheme.

"4. Wherefore, in such a situation of things, a church or denomination must, in some way or other, explicitly declare how they understand the Scriptures, in order to knowing each other's religious sentiments, and that the true disciples of Christ may join together in bearing testimony against errors.

"5. No true Christian, no honest man, can be unwilling to let his principles be known, in the most free, full, and satisfactory manner, whether by word of mouth or by writing.

"6. The grand design of creeds, confessions, and catechisms, etc., is to let our sense of the Scriptures be known in writing, that all who think with us may openly join with us, to promote the same common cause.

"*Objection.* This design, however good, may easily be frustrated. Heretics may subscribe to our creeds and confessions with a design to deceive us.

"*Answer.* No doubt they many times *do* so; for they are commonly men of but little conscience. Therefore we ought to be the more on our guard; examine those who have given just cause of suspicion; watch over their conversation daily; and take all possible care to prevent their ill designs, instead of giving them that full latitude they desire, by our discarding creeds, and growing indifferent about the great principles of Christianity.

"*Objection.* But what if they refuse to let us know what their religious sentiments are?

"*Answer.* We ought to refuse to hold communion with them; for no one has a right to Christian communion, but on a public profession of Christianity.

"*Objection.* But they *do* profess Christianity; for they profess to believe the Scriptures to be the word of God.

"*Answer.* They do not profess Christianity in the sense of the Scriptures, unless they profess to believe the real principles of Christianity. Some in the apostolic age said they were Jews, who were of the synagogue of Satan. (Rev. ii. 9.) In Christ's account, they lied. (iii. 9.) Some among the Galatians, who professed to believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, had, as Paul says, gone off to another gospel, and deserved excommunication,—to be cut off. (Gal. i. 6, and v. 12.) Their professing to believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and at the same time refusing to let us know how they understand the Scriptures, gives us no rational evidence that they really believe the true principles of Christianity. Yea, their refusing to let us know their religious sentiments, gives us just ground to fear they are not sound. It is certain they do not act an open part, as becomes the followers of Christ, but act like heretics, condemned by themselves. And while they act in this manner, they ought not to be allowed communion, as not making a proper profession of Christianity.

"*Objection.* But this is persecution.

"*Answer.* What! is it persecution not to consider and treat them as sound in the faith, when they refuse to let us know what their faith is?

"*Objection.* They say they are Christians, and believe the Bible.

"*Answer.* But they refuse to let us know what they mean by Christianity, or what truths they believe to be contained in that book called the Bible.

"*Objection.* According to Scripture, no further profession is needful to an admission to church communion, than that we believe Jesus Christ to be the Messiah.

"*Answer.* No further reply is needful, than to cite the words of the apostle: 'A heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject;' for all heretics profess to believe Jesus to be the Messiah; and herein they differ from gross infidels; and yet they ought to be excommunicated. This seems to me the sum of the matter. Yours etc.

"J. BELLAMY."

The following paper, endorsed "Proposals made to the society of Bethlem by their minister, presented to a committee appointed for the purpose, to be by them laid before the society at their meeting, March 15, 1769," explains itself: —

"BETHLEM, *March* 8, 1769.

"GENTLEMEN: When the society of Bethlem first invited me to be their minister, above twenty-nine years ago, I had observed the difficulties which sometimes had subsisted between ministers and people; that ministers would go to work because they had not salary enough, and people would complain because their ministers went to work, and they would blame each other, and contend and quarrel, whereby the good ends of the ministry would be, in a manner, wholly frustrated; and considering the smallness and poverty of the society, and in view of these things, I objected against their proceeding to settle a minister so soon, and against my accepting their invitation, and made to their committee the following declaration: 'I do not intend, if I should be a minister, to work for my living, or quarrel for my living. I am not willing to settle in the work of the ministry, unless I may give myself wholly to it; and I fear you are not able to support a minister.' To this the committee made the following answer: 'It is just such a minister as this we would have; and do you settle among us, and you shall never want.'

"Gentlemen, not to mention any of those straits and difficulties I went through for many years, when you were poor, very poor, all which I bore so patiently as never to ask for any relief, (rather I have relieved you in the depth of my straits, because of your great poverty,) – not to mention, I say, any of these things, I will only say, that upon a careful view of my circumstances, some weeks past, there has appeared

no way but to go to work, or ask for relief. . . . I told one of my deacons my case, and he advised me to let it be known; and a number of the chief men in the society being met, to consult about admitting or rejecting a proposal, made by our Woodbury neighbors, of getting annexed to this society, this I judged a good time for so doing, because this society, if they thought best, had now to appearance an opportunity to enlarge their bounds, and render themselves more able to give an honorable support to a minister. I therefore, not without trembling for fear of the dreadful consequences, (for disaffection and contention are dreadful things in my view,) mentioned my case to the aforesaid men in private, and submitted the affair absolutely to their judgment. I told them I would not mention it to the society if they thought not best. They freely declared that I had done well in mentioning my case, and for their own parts declared their readiness to relieve me. One said he was willing to give £80, another £85, another £90, another £95, a year, all to be paid in money. This was generous. However, being not at all desirous to take that advantage of their generous offers that I might have done, I told them I would accept of £80, paid as aforesaid, although the generality of the company offered £85 or £90. . . . This conversation passed in private; but the news soon got abroad in the society, and I have been in great fears it would break the parish to pieces. And things are now so circumstanced, that the wisest thing I can do, according to my best judgment, to put an end to all dispute about these matters, is, to make the following proposals: —

"1. If the society of Bethlem think I have been so unfaithful in the ministry, as that I do not deserve from them an honorable maintenance, I will consent to resign the work of the ministry among them, and give back my settlement to them.

"2. If the society think I live in too expensive a manner, and that less salary will do well enough, I offer that, if they will call in a candidate to settle in my room, and get united in one who can live cheaper, I will resign, and will also return back to the society all that part of my settlement, which, by indifferent men, shall be judged to be their share in justice.

"And I do most solemnly declare that I do not make these proposals from a desire to get away from this society, but only in consequence of that same temper which I expressed in the first declaration I ever made on this subject, viz.: 'I am not willing to work for my living, or quarrel for my living; I am not willing to be a minister, unless I may give myself wholly to the work;' for I verily think it is the will of God my whole time and life should be entirely consecrated to this business.

"Now, the God of wisdom, and of peace, direct your hearts into the

ways of wisdom and peace, to the glory of his own name, and for the good of you and your posterity, of his infinite mercy through Jesus Christ.

"JOSEPH BELLAMY."

A communication so frank, decided, and friendly, led, as might be expected, to an immediate arrangement of this difficulty, if so it may be called, and to the vote, on the part of the society, to settle on their pastor the maintenance he thought sufficient. Satisfactory provision thus being made for his support, he continued with them, as before, doing with his might what his hands found to do.

At this period, Mr. Bellamy carried on a correspondence, already extended, and now increasing, with distinguished men, both at home and abroad.* His exercise and recreation were found in the superintendence of his farm, from which also he obtained in part the means of supporting and educating his large family. With the exception of his "True Religion," almost all his works were published between the years 1753 and 1769. By these his reputation was more and more extended; and as several of the more important were republished in Great Britain, he came to be esteemed in that country as one of the ablest divines in the colonies. In 1768, through the influence of his friends and admirers, Dr. Erskine, of Edinburgh, and his brother, the Earl of Buchan, he was honored with the degree of Doctor in Divinity, from the college of Aberdeen. In acknowledgment of their interest, and the honor conferred, he wrote to the latter the following letter: —

"BETHLEM, *March* 4, 1769.

"MY LORD: You have done me the highest honor I am capable of receiving, in the character of a divine, in soliciting and obtaining the diploma you have sent me, and which I received this winter past. And you have acted from motives worthy of the noblest lord, yea, of the best Christian. In your favor of March 6, 1768, by which the first intelligence of your attempt and your success was given me, and by which I was surprised with an event I had never expected, you hint your motives — your love to the gospel of Christ, and your warm attachment to its faithful ministers, 'who are found to walk simply and zealously in the ways of truth and life.' Great sir, if those who give a cup of cold water to a disciple of Christ, in the name of a disciple, shall be rewarded with eternal life in heaven, what shall be the reward, how great, how glorious, that shall be given to those who, in high life, condescend to look

* Some of his numerous correspondents were Presidents Burr, Davies, Edwards, (father and son,) Finley, Drs. Erskine, Hopkins, Rogers, Wheelock, and Rev. Messrs. Blair, Brainard, Davenport, Tennent, etc., etc.

down upon those who are low, and love and honor them, and procure honors for them, merely because they are supposed to be faithful to Christ Jesus! If I am not the honest man you take me to be, yet, as you have done this honor simply in this view, you will not lose your reward. And, my lord, I profess, as in the presence of the Lord, you have laid me under the greatest obligations to fidelity, 'to walk simply and zealously in the ways of truth and life,' you could have done, at the same time you have done me the highest honor. And believe me, my lord, all my honors, all my talents, my soul and body, all I have and can do, I am more determined than ever to devote to God and the Redeemer.

"I ask your prayers that God will keep this in my heart while I live; and afterward may I meet your lordship in heaven, whither your pious father is lately gone in triumph, and with you receive the honor of hearing from the voice of God, 'Well done, good and faithful servants; enter into the joy of your Lord.' Then, sir, you will fully know the grateful sentiments which fill the heart of your most unworthy, most obliged, most humble servant,

"J. BELLAMY."

The peculiar interest that once attached to the subject of the following letter, has long since passed away. The letter itself, however, like several others given in this Memoir, is valuable as throwing light on the character of its author.

"BETHLEM, *March* 8, 1770.

"REV. SIR: Men who have a disinterested love to truth will be glad to see their mistakes, and will love those who kindly point them out. And as you acknowledge in yours of February 21, that I have heretofore treated you with peculiar marks of esteem and friendship, so you will accept this attempt to point out some of the mistakes in your letter, as an act of the best kind of friendship.

"*Mistake* 1. You say I expressed my dislike that some gentlemen 'should *insinuate*,' etc. No, sir! They did not *insinuate*. They expressly charged me with a most scandalous crime, and that without any just grounds.

"*Mistake* 2. You say, 'as though my sentiments, in any respects, *resemble* Mr. Sandeman's.' No, sir! This is *not* what they did. They charged me with being a Sandemean; for so far as Sandeman agrees with the assembly of divines at Westminster, I agree with him; but wherein he differs from them, I differ from him.

"*Mistake* 3. You say, 'that I roundly affirmed that such insinuations were repugnant to the light of their own consciences.' No, sir! I never did so. I always owned that my sentiments did, in some respects, resem-

ble Mr. Sandeman's; i. e., so far as his resemble the Westminster confession and catechism. But this I say, that if they or you charge me with adopting the *peculiar* sentiments of Sandeman, it must be owing to ignorance or malice; and if to ignorance, it is criminal ignorance, because my printed works prove the contrary. Whether they acted contrary to the light of their own consciences, will appear from the next particular.

"*Mistake* 4. You insinuate that the ground of this charge of Sandemanism against me, was my approving Mr. Hopkins. No, sir! It was before Mr. Hopkins published any thing on means, and before they or I knew what his sentiments were on that subject. It was merely for my disputing two propositions laid down by Mr. Mills, at the house of Mr. Star, at Danbury, before a room full of people, viz.: 1. It is inconsistent with the divine perfections to require repentance and faith of any man, without giving him sufficient assistance of the Holy Spirit to believe and repent. 2. God never did do so. If these propositions are true, the whole Calvinistic scheme is false, as you yourself know.

"*Mistake* 5. You take for granted that Mr. S. would give some directions to the awakened sinner, to some act or other, even as the apostles directed sinners to repent and believe. But this is not true; for S. holds that no act, no volition, no kind of exercise of body or mind is required in order to justification, and that therefore nothing at all is to be directed unto.

"*Mistake* 6. You insinuate that Mr. Hopkins agrees with Mr. S. in his notion of directions to sinners. But this is notoriously false; for Mr. Hopkins holds that some act is necessary in order to justification, and that this act is to be directed to, — just contrary to Mr. S.

"*Mistake* 7. You suppose that Mr. Hopkins thinks it is not the duty of a sinner to 'offer up his desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ,' for this is your definition of prayer, and you like your catechism. But this is not true; for he holds that it *is* the duty of the sinner thus to pray for a new heart, and for every other gospel blessing, as well as it is of the saint; or else, —

"*Mistake* 8. You think that Mr. H. holds that a sinner had better not pray at all, than pray in the manner the unregenerate do. But, again, this is not true, as appears from his reply to Mr. M., p. 109, where he says, 'This is the only way to escape destruction,' viz., the way of praying; or else, —

"*Mistake* 9. You think ministers ought to direct sinners not to pray, as in duty they ought, but in a sinful manner, as being the very thing God requires; which is so absurd that I will not impute it to you, unless you deliberately avow it; or else, —

"*Mistake* 10. You think that the unregenerate are not totally depraved, but really love holiness for itself, which is to give up, in effect, the whole Scripture scheme of religion.

"*Mistake* 11. You say, 'that I declare I do not mean to break upon the controversy about means.' I never said so.

"*Mistake* 12. You say, 'that I declare I do not mean to break upon the point of qualifications' [for coming to the Lord's table.] This is not the whole truth. I *do* mean to break with those who give up the covenant of grace, and substitute a graceless covenant in its room. But I do not mean to break with those who hold to the covenant of grace, although they differ in some sentiments and practices from me.

"*Mistake* 13. You say, 'that I drive on matters, etc.,' whereas I never in my life *drave* so hard as to preach in another man's pulpit on the sacramental controversy, right in the face of the minister, and church, and platform! This driving, I own, is like the driving of Jehu! *And thou art the man!*

"These are some of the mistakes of your letter, submitted to your cool consideration, by your sincere friend,

"JOSEPH BELLAMY.

"To Rev. Mr. Smith, of Sharon.

"P. S. Before ministers come to an open breach, as you seem to design to do with the association, they ought to understand each other, and see wherein they differ, and whether their differences cannot be settled privately. And for this end, it is their indispensable duty to discourse over matters among themselves, in the most cool, candid, and friendly manner. If a private brother is bound by the law of Christ to tell his brother his fault between them two alone, much more are ministers associated bound to do so. It is a vain thing for us to cry, 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which he saith; and it is worse than vain for us to counteract those laws of Christ which we urge on others. Therefore, before you proceed any further, I earnestly desire a full and friendly talk on the point in controversy; for I do believe that if you rightly understood us, you would neither think, feel, write, talk, nor preach in the manner you do. But if you design to give up that scheme of religion which is contained in the Westminster confession and catechism, which we think agreeable to the word of God, and to blacken it and those who adhere to it, by the cry of Sandemanism, and will not have a friendly talk, your character for an honest man is justly forfeited. But I hope better things of you. Therefore let us see each other face to face, and talk over matters, like men and Christians, and as becomes the professed ministers of Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace. Yours,

"J. B."

The following letters to an absent son exhibit Dr. Bellamy, as a Christian father, deeply interested in the temporal, and especially in the spiritual welfare of his child, and expressing his feelings with earnestness and affection: —

"Bethlem, *Feb.* 6, 1773.

"My Dear Child: Yours, of January 20, I have received, and it gives me pleasure to hear that your situation pleases you. You want, you say, 'the advice of a kind father.' You need an almighty and all-wise Father, my child, who will live forever, the great Conductor of all things, and the Father of lights, to take care of you, to guide your ways, and be your Father indeed. Of him you might ask wisdom every hour; and he can give, and is willing to give, wisdom to him that asketh. And how you can get through this world well, die in peace, and be happy in the world to come, without his friendship and patronage, I know not. He has been my hope, and help, and guide from my youth up; and *he is a very kind Father.* I advise you then, first of all, to become his child. And why should you be unwilling? Why should an orphan, in a lost world, be unwilling to have an almighty, infinitely wise, and all-good Father? Are your sins great? Are you afraid to come into his presence? My child, you are already in his presence; and your sins appear greater to him than they do to you. And yet so great is his goodness, that he declares, 'He that confesseth, and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy.' . . . Take time to read your Bible; take time, two or three times a day, for secret prayer. The favor of God is worth more than all the world; and without it you are undone forever! 'Therefore seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you.'

"Fidelity in your studies, my son, will recommend you to your preceptor. Good nature and kindness in your daily behavior will recommend you to the family in which you live. Humility and benevolence will recommend you to all around. A minister's son ought to be sober-minded. A vain conversation will hurt your character, and *a companion of fools shall be destroyed!* . . . May God Almighty bless you! So prays your kind father,

"JOSEPH BELLAMY.

"To Mr. Jonathan Bellamy, at Norwich."

"Bethlem, *April* 3, 1775.

"My Dear Child: Yours came safe. — Death comes unexpected! Poor ——! And what if your turn should be next? I hear Mrs. —— is lately converted. In your heavenly Father's house there is bread enough and to spare. He is your Creator and the God of glory; and

at a distance from him there is nothing but *husks!* My desire and prayer to God is, that my son Jonathan may be saved. And then, whatever happens to America or to you, this year or next, you will be happy forever. . . .

"I don't expect civil war, . . . but I expect the dissolution of the British empire, if matters are pushed much further. I expect to be at Hartford at the election. There you may see or write to me. And every thing a kind father can do for you, according to his utmost abilities, you may expect from Yours,

"J. BELLAMY.

"To Mr. Jonathan Bellamy, at Norwich."

"Bethlem, *August* 12, 1776.

"Dear Jonathan: This morning, before sunrise, I wrote to send, by David, a letter which will come with this. We rejoice to hear of your welfare. May you live through the storm, that we may once more rejoice together. We have news from the northern army. Six of our people, who went up last spring, are dead. Near two thousand are sick. The sick suffer much, and many die. . . . Burgoin's men, about two thousand, at St. John's, are very busy in building water craft. Write often, and send to the care of Lieut. David Bellamy, in Col. Kinsman's regiment, at New York, who, if he is stationed on the York side, can send every week; or if not, Dr. Cogswell, or Major Aaron Burr, can take care of your letters.

"J. BELLAMY.

"To Jonathan Bellamy, Esq., in Col. Bradley's Regiment, at Bergen, near New York."

This son, the favorite child of Dr. Bellamy, early in the revolution, had, as the last letter shows, entered the army of his country. At the close of the campaign of '76, just as he was about returning to his parents and friends, he was seized with the small-pox, and died at Oxford, New Jersey, January 4, 1777. The following letter was written, by the deeply afflicted father, to the lady at whose house he died: —

"Bethlem, *Feb.* 4, 1777.

"Mrs. Swesse: At your house our deceased son, Jonathan Bellamy, was sick and died; and we have been informed of the great tenderness, the abundant kindness, with which, stranger as he was, he was treated by your good mother, by you, by Dr. C——, and by all the family. My son, David Bellamy, has given you the reward for your abundant trouble which you asked; but the chief is still unpaid for: your love, your tenderness, your motherly kindness to a sick stranger, attacked with an

infectious disease,—for all this you never can be rewarded in this world. Our hearts overflow with gratitude. May God Almighty reward your aged mother; give her peace in death; some kind friend to close her eyes, and a safe convoy of angels, to guard her to the world of spirits! May God Almighty bless you and your children with all spiritual and temporal blessings; equally provide you all with kind friends to stand by you in death, and give you a portion in the world of love. And God Almighty bless the humane, the kind Dr. C., and may the last words of my dying son to him be fulfilled: "I hope to meet you in heaven." Perhaps never was a son dearer to his parents and friends. We all join to thank you, and to wish you the best of Heaven's blessings, and to hope the tender mercy of God will preserve you all through your sickness, and give you to see many good days in this world. And if we should be so happy as to meet you in the world of perfect love, and find our dear son Jonathan there, we will join to love and thank you forever!

"In behalf of his mother, brothers, and sisters, who all join in the hearty thanks I write, I am your much obliged,

"JOSEPH BELLAMY."

The following extracts are, for the most part, from family letters. The first was addressed to his daughter, Mrs. Sheldon, soon after her marriage.

"BETHLEM, *July* 9, 1783.

"MY DEAR CHILD: Your two letters came safely, and gave pleasure to your parents. . . . By this time you have formed new connections, and have a new world opened to you, with fine prospects. But your prospects will be infinitely more agreeable when you move to your Father's house, in the world above, (which will happen soon,) if you will be a good and obedient child to Him who gave you existence and all your present enjoyments. You and your husband may there be eternally happy together, as members of the community that is called '*the bride—the Lamb's wife.*' Give us a line often. My blessing to my son-in-law, whom you justly think the best husband in the world. . . Be a good wife, and so be your husband's joy. Make a good Christian, and so be the joy of angels. Your affectionate father,

"J. BELLAMY."

"BETHLEM, *August* 1, 1783.

"MY DEAR CHILD: Your mother continues ill,—confined to her bed,—unable for the most part to rise. . . J——B—— is on his death-bed. I am going to see him as soon as the horse comes. . . . The awaken-

ing increases and spreads; in a lower degree in Cornwall, Goshen, Torrington, and in a higher degree in Norfolk, Winchester, Torringford, Colebrook, Barkhamsted, etc.

"The gay and the painful scenes of this world will soon all of them be over and gone, never to return. You and I shall be in the eternal world. There you will (perfectly purified from every vicious bias) join with angels and saints in celebrating the praises of God and the Lamb, astonished at that sovereign grace that arrested a poor inconsiderate prodigal, and gave a heart to say, '*I will arise and go to my Father.*' Or you will be in the company of the damned, in perfect horror! O Betsey! Betsey!! You were early dedicated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in baptism. It was meant, it was intended and designed, that you should be the Lord's. O, kneel before the majesty of Heaven; feel and confess all your guilt; ask his pardon in the name of Christ, and his grace to form you anew for his service. . . . But it is time, for this morning, to drop my pen, and attend to other affairs. The God who fills heaven and earth with his presence be with you all the day long, and bless you, my child!

"*Monday, August* 4. You see it is four days since I began, and I have not found time, even yet, to finish my letter. S—— H—— is sick. Z—— D——'s widow died suddenly a few days ago. D—— L—— is sick. . . . So we hurry through the world. So this house, in past years, was a house of business, — your mother at the head of it. Now it is a hospital. Remember, Betsey, so it will be with you and your dear Charles. The hurry and bustle of life must give way to sickness and death; but in the realms above there is eternal health and peace. Tell Mr. Sheldon to buy *Mr. Edwards's History of Redemption*, in which you have a map of the road to that world, and a glimpse of its glory. I am too much hurried to write. Adieu, my dear children.

"J. BELLAMY.

"To Mr. and Mrs. C. Sheldon."

"Bethlem, *Jan.* 11, 1784.

"My Dear Child: Your mother has a better winter than usual. E—— H——'s wife is dead. T—— S——'s wife, whom I saw yesterday, is at the point of death. And my dear Betsey, you know, that you are soon to die! Yes, very soon the glass will be out. The last sands are running as to your father and mother, and old age and death will soon overtake your husband and you. Then, in that hour, the favor of the Almighty will be of worth, of infinite worth! Now you are invited to be his children, to kneel before him for his blessing. He himself invites you, and will take it as an affront if you are inattentive

to his invitation. And the more so because of the many favors you have already received from his hands, and because he offers you an eternal inheritance in heaven. If you hearken, it will give pleasure to your affectionate father, J. BELLAMY."

"BETHLEM, *May* 22, 1784.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: Mrs. H. is to return home, and I send this and my Essay on the gospel, so that if I cannot visit, yet I may instruct you in the way of eternal life. . . . Your mother's health declines, and mine is low indeed. W—— is gone. So the old folks are left alone. . . . We are soon to die, and see your face no more. But there is a better world. Be a good Christian, a good wife to a good husband, a good sister, a good neighbor to all around you. Take pleasure in doing good. Take better care of your health; and always remember that we are full of kind affection to you. May the Almighty take you all under his protection. So wishes your father, J. BELLAMY."

"BETHLEM, *Nov.* 6, 1784.

"MY DEAR CHILDREN: William * is now become the special object of our chief attention. Whether nature has formed him for books, or for trade, we wish to know. We pray you to keep him to business in the time of business, and to books in vacant hours; and mind and observe carefully, that you may make a good judgment as to his genius and taste. Encourage him to application, for it will, in future years, give you great joy to reflect that you have been the means of real and lasting good to my dear child, and your younger brother. Your mother enjoys better health than usual. The doctor thinks she will get well. And if she might have health, and my children enjoy the divine blessing, it would indeed comfort my old age. God Almighty is ready to bless you, if you ask him; more ready than a kind father is to give bread to his children. Write often, and be particular. I am your kind father,

"J. BELLAMY.

"TO MR. AND MRS. SHELDON."

"BETHLEM, *Dec.* 25, 1784.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: We have great consolation as to you, in your illness, that you have one of the best husbands in the world; and yet, so great is our concern for your good, that it is difficult to keep from anxiety. But the Almighty can take a fatherly care of you, through every change. Our highest wishes would be gratified to see you hide under the shadow of his wings, a penitent, a dutiful child, crying, '*Abba, Father!*' To

* His youngest son.

have an all-sufficient, almighty, infinitely good Creator so near you, is infinitely encouraging. Hear his call! Hearken to his kind invitations. Fly to his arms, as did the repenting prodigal, and, infinitely unworthy as you are, you will meet with as kind a reception as he did. We expect a letter every post, but none comes. This is the third time we have written since your last. Write, if it be but three lines, to give comfort to your fond parents. My love to all yours. Adieu, my dear child. Your affectionate father, J. BELLAMY."

"BETHLEM, *Sept.* 2, 1785."

"MY DEAR BETSEY: I have just been in to look at your mother's corpse! It is pleasant, sedate, quiet, like her mind, when she left this world of woe; for she fell asleep on Wednesday, August 31, as the sun set, without a sigh, without a struggle, without a groan. "I am dying," about a minute before, were her last words. She was in the perfect exercise of her reason, as she had been all day; for she was taken, a little before sunrise, with what Dr. B—— used to call a spasm on the vitals. She sat up on the bedside until sunset, unable to lie down, surrounded with kind neighbors, and then fell asleep, to appearance without pain. To the silent grave, this day, her remains are to be committed. . . . It is now in the forenoon, about eleven o'clock, while I sit solitary, writing to poor motherless Betsey. . . . If God Almighty be your Father, my dear child, there is no terror in death: it is only leaving pain, sorrow, and tears, for eternal rest, and joy, and peace. In your infancy you was dedicated to God in baptism, — to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Do you but ratify that transaction, with your kind husband, and my dear William, who were each of you, in infancy, devoted to Almighty God, and he will be your Father forever!

"*Saturday morning, Sept.* 3, *before sunrise.* The solemn day is past, and here I sit alone, — not one left, — all my children gone, — my wife in the silent grave! I shall go next! My children and grandchildren will follow soon! This is not our home! O my dear child, when you leave this world, where do you expect to inhabit, and in what company, — in what employment? There are but two places beyond the grave. Where will you and my dear connections go? Now is the time to make your choice. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. You could not enjoy the company of the polite, if you had no politeness; nor can you enjoy the company of the inhabitants of heaven, unless you are like them in all your sentiments and feelings. But I must stop. . . . Adieu for the present. . . . May God Almighty bless you. So prays your kind father, J. BELLAMY.

"TO MR. AND MRS. CHARLES SHELDON."

"BETHLEM, *Oct.* 1, 1785.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: . . . On Wednesday I arrived home, and found all well. A—— C——'s little boy is dead. This is a world of sorrow. Happy are those that get safe to the land of rest. . . . . Solitude! solitude!! O my dear Betsey, be a good wife, be a good mother, be a good sister, while your friends are about you in the world. Be a good Christian, that you may be received among the blessed, when you go hence to be here no more! I thank you for your kind letter. An empty and solitary house contains your kind and affectionate father,

"J. BELLAMY."

"BETHLEM, *Oct.* 10, 1785.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: Mr. Sheldon is arrived safe, and brings me your kind, dutiful letter. I thank you, my dear child. Only let me meet you in heaven. . . . I am better since I wrote last. I am not alone. God is my consolation. I cannot live long. I hope for eternal rest. Charge William to improve his time, to cultivate his mind, to be a man, to be a Christian. In haste, adieu, my dear child, J. BELLAMY."

"BETHLEM, *Nov.* 20, 1785.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: This day, yours of October 12 came to hand. How full of concern for my health! How very kind, my dear child! My health grows better. I am in good spirits. But I should rejoice exceedingly to hear that God had given you a heart to devote yourself to him and his service forever! But you ask which is worst, for an impenitent sinner to join with the church, or neglect it? Some children wish their parents dead, — wicked, rebellious children! Which would be most criminal, in a child of such character, to write as you do, with a profession of so great concern for my health, or not to write at all? That is, which is worst, to lie, or say nothing? This needs no answer. Further, —

"1. Baptism, and the Lord's supper, are seals to the covenant of grace. When you sign and seal a bond, you by that act profess a present consent to all that is contained therein, and an engagement, for the future, to conduct accordingly.

"2. You have already, in your infancy, been consecrated to God, through Jesus Christ, in baptism, to be wholly and forever the Lord's. This you ought to ratify without delay. Then you will be God's child, and then you may eat children's bread, and will be an heir of eternal life.

"3. If you have not done this, but the contrary, your baptism is of no avail. You are yet under the wrath of God, and under the curse of his holy law; and, dying in this state, must perish forever, along with the unbaptized and impenitent. Therefore, —

"4. On your knees, before your Maker, the Almighty God, with a penitent, broken heart, confess all your sins, with all their aggravations, and accept the punishment of your iniquity; justify the righteous sentence of his holy law, and apply to sovereign grace, through Jesus Christ, for pardon and eternal life; for it is written, '*He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy!*'

"I charge you, my dear Betsey, I charge you, my dear William, let nothing hinder you! You may, when you come to die, wish you had taken warning! Amazing terrors seized on poor E—— G—— about three weeks before she died. She lamented greatly that she had misimproved her past advantages, and sent to me (from Southbury, where she died) to warn the young people not to delay to a death-bed. . . .

"Soon, very soon, I shall have done writing to my children. Old age and death are very near. And this is my comfort, that God Almighty has been my chief joy from the time I was seventeen years old to this day. Nor am I alone; nor do I often feel lonesome. But, O Betsey, *let me see* YOU *at the right hand of Christ at last!* With kind regards to Mr. Sheldon, yours affectionately,

"J. BELLAMY.

"To MRS. SHELDON."

"BETHLEM, *May* 19, 1786.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: L—— got safe to Preston, and is to return this week. . . . My health was bettered by the journey, but at best is poor. Your mother has already gone to the land of silence, and every day brings me nearer to the grave. But if wisdom might enter into the hearts of my children, and they be taken into the divine protection, they might spare me. I design to take care of my health. However, I shall soon bid you an eternal farewell for this world. My love to your kind husband, and my dear William. However much I am in the hurry of business, (as I am like to be this summer,) if William will write to me, I will return him letter for letter. In the midst of all your cares, remember eternity. Your affectionate father,

"J. BELLAMY.

"To MRS. SHELDON."

As Dr. Bellamy advanced in years, his incessant studies and labors were observed by his friends to be fast wearing upon his strength, and hastening the decays of nature. And this effect was increased by a severe domestic affliction, (alluded to in the foregoing letters,) — the loss of the wife of his youth, to whom he was tenderly attached, and who died in 1785. After a time, however, his strength and spirits seemed to rally, and in the year following he contracted a second marriage. But soon

after, he was struck with paralysis, on the 19th of November, 1786. By this, he was wholly deprived of the use of his limbs on the left side; his speech was much impeded, and his intellect greatly impaired. The ablest physicians were consulted, but their attempted remedies were in vain. The stroke was a severe one, not only to his family and immediate friends, but to the ministry and churches of the county and state. At the next meeting of the consociation of which he was a member, the event was suitably noticed as an afflictive dispensation of an all-wise Providence, and the following letter was ordered to be sent to him by his brethren in the ministry, as an expression of their sympathy and affection: —

"CANAAN, *June* 7, 1787.

"REV. AND DEAR BRO.: We of the Association of Litchfield county, being met for the first time since divine Providence has disenabled you from attending with us, greatly regret the want of your presence with us, which used to give us pleasure and instruction; and most of all, that your present indisposition is a presage that we shall see your face no more amongst us, which is to us a striking instance of the uncertainty of the continuance of our usefulness in the ministerial work, as well as of the enjoyment of all sublunary favors, as we have the assurance that we cannot continue by reason of death. Be assured, dear brother, that we have a sympathetic feeling for you under your present confinement; and yet we rejoice to hear that God enables you to maintain so comfortable a hope of a blessed immortality, where sickness, sin, and sorrow are perpetual strangers. We heartily wish and pray that God Almighty would afford you the constant manifestations of his love, and that your faith and hope may increase and brighten, till they terminate in the actual fruition of the fulness of joy in eternal glory. These, dear brother, with our warmest affection, are presented by your sincere friends and brethren in the faith and fellowship of the blessed gospel of the divine Redeemer.

"Signed, by order of Association,

"JONATHAN LEE, *Moderator.*

"AMMI R. ROBBINS, *Scribe.*"

Notwithstanding his infirmities, Dr. Bellamy still kept up his interest in his family, as the following extracts from some of his letters, penned in the hours of his weakness, will show: —

"BETHLEM, *Jan.* 18, 1787.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: On November 19, I was taken sick. Two long months, to-morrow, I have been confined, unable to move a finger, or lie on my left side. This is the first time I take pen in hand. I expect Rev. Mr. Hart and wife, and Mr. Sheldon, will meet at Hartford at the election,

and then visit me. But if I am dead, may the living God be a father to my children. My love to William. Perhaps I shall see Springfield no more! Your affectionate father, J. B."

"BETHLEM, *March* 28, 1787.

"MY DEAR CHILD: Yours of the 22d has just come to hand. . . . Submit your plans, my dear child, and your children, to the God of all, — to your father's God, who hath given me great consolation the winter past, while confined to a bed of sickness, with death and eternal life in constant view. Your mother sends her love. I am a little better, but my case is doubtful. Your visit before I die would be very acceptable. God Almighty bless you and yours. My strength is gone. I cannot write! O, let me see your husband, and sister, and children in heaven!

"I am your sick father, J. B."

"BETHLEM, *July* 18, 1787.

"MR. SHELDON: On the 19th of November, I was seized with numb palsy, and have neither walked nor rode on horseback since that day. On the borders of the grave, may I hope to see your face again in this world? O my Charles! O my Betsey! I cannot read or write, but with great difficulty. If you can, pray see me before I go into the invisible world. God Almighty bless you. Your affectionate father, J. B."

"BETHLEM, *August*, 1787.

"MY DEAR BETSEY: After a confinement of nine months, once more I take my pen in hand, for the last time. . . . Could I ride, I might live; but confined as I am, without exercise, I shall die. May I meet you and yours among the blessed! I am your affectionate, sick father,

"J. B."

"BETHLEM, *Oct.* 21, 1789.

"MR. AND MRS. SHELDON: Your mother's heart is full of concern for William. My confidence is in your fidelity. Keep him out of company, in business constantly, and, in all leisure hours, at reading, writing, etc. This is the greatest kindness to him, to me, and to yourselves. Idleness, bad company, card-playing, will lead him to ruin. Be at pains to make him a man fit for business. Every time you write, let me know how he conducts. He consents to this, and commits himself to your protection and instruction. Your affectionate father, J. B."

In this state of inactivity and deep affliction, induced by his disease, Dr. Bellamy remained, for more than three years, entirely confined to

his dwelling.* There was little variation in his disorder. For the most part, he would sit in his accustomed chair, apparently drowsy or absent-minded, taking but little notice of any thing about him. In lucid, or rather wakeful intervals, that now and then occurred, he would seem to be himself again; and at such times, to the great satisfaction of his friends, he would dwell, though with much difficulty and slowness of utterance, on the great truths of the gospel, the dispensations of Providence toward the church and himself, his entire resignation to the will of God, his full and sustaining trust in the divine mercy through Christ, and his firm and joyous hope of approaching glory. As an instance of the manner in which, at times, he would rouse from his stupor, — on one occasion, a friend and neighbor in the ministry came in, and seeing him sitting, as usual, immovable, said, "Dr. Bellamy, you don't know me!" "Y-e-s," he replied, slowly raising his eyes, "y-e-s, I—do—know—you —it—is —— —— ——!" The other, then alluding to his afflictive state, remarked, "that it was a mysterious Providence which had thus laid him aside from his usefulness, and that in the midst of his active labors." Raising his hand, and pointing upward, with the deepest solemnity of look and manner, Dr. B. replied, "*In-fi-nite wis-dom, in-fi-nite good-ness!*" His hand and eyes then fell again, as though he were exhausted by the effort, and he became heedless of every thing, as before.

These intervals of full self-possession became shorter and less frequent in the later stages of his complaint. About three weeks before his death, he was seized with a severe cold, which, after a few days, suddenly left him, and was followed by an oppression of the lungs, spitting of blood, and finally by violent pleuritic inflammation. His sufferings were intense. His groans, as one of his sons from his sick chamber writes, were heard through the house, at every breath he drew. And after a painful struggle, in which his patience was sustained, and his Christian assurance was unwavering and joyous to the end, he gradually sunk to his rest, on the evening of Saturday, the 6th of March, 1790, in the fiftieth year of his ministry, and the seventy-second of his age. The nature of his illness was

* In the "Reflections of a visitor on the character of Dr. Emmons," it is said that "Dr. Bellamy, when he had lost the tone of his mind, became too great a burden for his relatives to retain in their houses, was obliged to leave the genial influences of home and kindred, and was boarded at the house of one of his parishioners." This statement, however, almost to a certainty, must have originated in mistaken information. Various expressions in his letters are inconsistent with the idea of his being away from his own dwelling; and the Rev. Dr. Robbins (of Hartford) says that his father went repeatedly to see him after his paralysis, *and always at his own house.*

such as to prevent any special expression of his feelings in the immediate prospect of eternity: but through his long confinement, he often expressed his firm and unchanging confidence in the Redeemer; and in his entire life as a Christian, and his labors for half a century as a minister of Jesus, he left the most clear and satisfying evidence, that his departure from the world was his entrance on the rest that remaineth for the people of God. For him "*to live was Christ, and to die was gain!*" His funeral was attended, on the Tuesday following, by all the ministers in the vicinity, by his own afflicted congregation, and by a large concourse of people from the adjacent towns. The feeling throughout the state, and more or less extensively throughout the land, was, that a great and good man had fallen in Israel, and that the church had lost a sound and skilful teacher, a wise counsellor, a powerful preacher, and an able and discriminating divine. The simple epitaph on his tombstone is, —

In memory of the
Rev. JOSEPH BELLAMY, D. D.,
First pastor of the church in Bethlem.
He died March 6, 1790,
In the seventy-second year of his age,
And the fiftieth of his ministry.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,
That they may rest from their labors,
And their works do follow them.

Dr. Bellamy was twice married. His first wife was Frances, daughter of Nathaniel* and Rebecca Sherman, of New Haven, to whom he was united in 1744, and by whom he had seven children.† She is frequently alluded to by his correspondents, as a lady of more than ordinary intellect and accomplishments; and by her amiable disposition, good sense, and sincere and decided piety, was eminently qualified for the station she was called in Providence to fill. During her entire married life, until the decline of her health prevented, "she sustained almost the whole weight of the family cares with a cheerful readiness, that her husband might be interrupted as little as possible in his studies, and other duties of his office;" and one secret of his successful labors and extended usefulness, is doubtless to be found in her assiduity in this respect. In all her domestic relations she was a great blessing, — truly a "help meet" for her

* The parents of Nathaniel, were Daniel Sherman and Abiah Street, who were married Sept. 28, 1664. Abiah Street, was a daughter of Rev. Nicholas Street, the successor of Davenport.

† David, Jonathan, Samuel, William, Rebecca, Lucy, and Elizabeth.

husband, relieving his cares, sympathizing in his joys and sorrows, faithful in training up his children aright, possessing, as she deserved, the affections, not only of her family, but of the congregation of her husband, of his numerous theological students, and of the many visitors who were continually sharing the hospitalities of her fireside and table. "Faithful to her family, to her friends, to the poor, to the church, and, above all, faithful to her God," she finished her earthly course, August 31, 1785, in the 63d year of her age. In the year following her death, Dr. Bellamy was again married, to Mrs. —— Storrs, widow of Rev. Andrew Storrs, of Watertown, by whom he had no issue, and who survived him.

In person, Dr. Bellamy was tall, and, in his youth, of a slender and thin habit; in middle life, well proportioned; in later years, portly, and almost heavy. His eyes were blue, inclining to gray, and his hair light and thin, though, according to the fashion of the times, it was, for the most part of his life, concealed by a large, flowing wig. In aspect and bearing, he was firm, dignified, and manly; and, as he inclined to old age, his face became more full and serious, and his whole appearance, especially in the pulpit, was in a high degree commanding and venerable.

In character, he was frank, open-hearted, bold, decided; a man of warm attachments and strong prejudices; ardent in his feelings, and firm, not to say *set*, in his opinions and ways. President Styles * says, "He was by nature of a haughty, domineering temper; and, till of late years, unmercifully censorious of his brethren in the ministry, and others who opposed him." But Styles was strongly prejudiced against him personally, and opposed to him on all the great questions of the day; and yet, even he admits that "he meliorated his temper in the latter part of his life;" that "his morals were rigid, regular, virtuous, and pious;" and that though "he needed much grace," "he *was* blessed with a considerable share of it." The truth is, as any candid person would easily gather even from Styles's portrait, Dr. Bellamy's character was marked by strength and individuality. He was a man to lead, and not to be led by others. His intellect was quick, searching, and powerful; his boldness and decision great; his wit ready and sarcastic, playful or overpowering, at will; his zeal for what he believed to be truth such, that, in its cause, he spared no one he deemed its opposer, whether high or low, enemy or friend. But he was eminently a *sincere* man, and no one could know him without feeling that the habitual endeavor of his life was, to subordinate all his powers and conduct to the control of religion. Dr. Bellamy also possessed strong common sense, an unusually sound

* MS. Diary, in the library of Yale College.

judgment, and an almost intuitive insight into character. A distinguished jurist once said of him, "His knowledge of men seems almost next to unerring;" and another used often to repeat the remark which, in his mentally disordered state, he made of a third person, "He's a *mysterious* man, and a mysterious character is always a dangerous one," as the sanest remark an insane man could make!* The conversational powers and resources of Dr. Bellamy were great, and among his friends he was open and free in the expression of his views. His society was much sought — a good proof it was much enjoyed; and he was careful, in the various interviews of friendship, to occupy his part with important and useful topics. A thinker himself, he made others think, and his friends rarely parted from him without both satisfaction and improvement. The letters of his numerous and distinguished correspondents show a deference to his judgment which was paid to no man of that day in New England, except his friend and teacher, Jonathan Edwards.

As a Christian, Dr. Bellamy had clear, just, and proportioned views of divine truth, and an experience accordant with these views, and such as might be expected in a character and temperament like his. A fragment in his handwriting intimates, that at the time of his conversion, his convictions of sin were deep, and for a season almost overwhelming; that, as the old divines would say, "he had a thorough law-work;" and, as the natural result, his views of the grace of Christ, in his own case, were tender, serious, and exalted, in an unusual degree. President Burr, as we have seen, alludes to "the clear discoveries of his love the Lord had given" him. President Edwards, who did not often deal in intensitives, speaks of the "very clear experience he had in his own soul," of the great truths he set forth in his "True Religion Delineated." And Brainard in one place records, "This day, being about to go from Mr. Bellamy's, where I had resided some time, I prayed with him and two or three Christian friends, and we gave ourselves to God with all our

* This anecdote is given in two forms. One (given in the sketch of Dr. Emmons, already referred to) says the remark was made, "when Dr. B. was in that unhappy state of mental disorder which cast a gloom over his latter days, that, imagining he was in Paradise, and on the point of calling a party of his friends around him, he mentioned one of his old pupils as one he would invite, but immediately recalled the name, saying, 'No, not he; he's a mysterious character; and a mysterious character is always a dangerous one!'" His late grandson, however, (J. H. Bellamy, Esq.,) who was usually very accurate in his recollections of his distinguished ancestor, often alluded to the remark as connected with a proposed arbitration, and as made respecting an individual nominated as an arbitrator, and to whom he objected. It was a *sane* remark, whether coming from a *sane* or an *insane* man!

hearts, to be his forever;" while elsewhere, he tells us of coming on a journey "to Mr. Bellamy's lodgings, and spending the evening with him in sweet conversation and prayer," adding, "Blessed be the Lord for this evening's opportunity together." — With Davenport we find him, at their first acquaintance, agreeing mutually "to set apart seasons for praying for each other;" and the whole tenor of his extensive correspondence shows, that he was an habitual student of the Bible, and eminently a prayerful and spiritual man. This was the impression he left in his family, on his children, on his numerous students, on his congregation, and on the entire community. His piety was such as to meet the divinely suggested test, that he that *doeth* God's will is one that loveth him. No man was more prompt in all things, and at any hazard, to follow out his convictions of duty. As one of many instances of this, it is related, that Dr. Hopkins, who at that time was much engaged in urging the sinfulness of slavery, called one day at the house of Dr. Bellamy, and, while there, pressed on the latter the duty of liberating his only slave. Dr. Bellamy defended the custom of slaveholding by the usual arguments; but Dr. Hopkins, having refuted them, one after another, called upon his friend, at once, in this case to act on the principle of doing to others as he would have them do to him. In reply, Dr. Bellamy said the slave was so faithful and judicious, that he was trusted with every thing, and in these circumstances was so happy in his servitude that he would not accept his freedom if it were offered. — "Will you liberate him if he desires it?" said Dr. H. — "Yes," said Dr. B., "I will." — "Call him," said Dr. H.; and as he entered, he asked him, "Have you a good, kind master?" "O, yes," was the reply, "very, very good!" — "And are you happy in your present condition?" — "Yes, master, very happy." — "But would you be more happy if you were free?" — His eye brightened with emotion and pleasure, as he promptly replied, "O, yes, master, I would be much more happy!" "You have your desire," said Dr. Bellamy, promptly and most kindly, "*from this moment you are free.*"

As a pastor, Dr. Bellamy was diligent in the discharge of his duties; cordial and familiar in his intercourse with his people; and plain, serious, and direct in his admonitions and counsels. No man could be more faithful to the sick, the afflicted, and the dying, than he was. Few have ever *watched* for souls, in every sense, more assiduously than he did. He was particularly attentive to the children and youth of his flock. He is believed to have been the first pastor in the land, if not in the world, who began, and through all his ministry kept up, a *Sabbath school* in his congregation, regularly spending an hour, in the interval of public wor-

ship, on the Sabbath, in catechizing and instructing one class of children, and another of adults, in the word of God. He was in the habit, also, of occasionally proposing, in meetings of his church, questions on subjects of a practical nature for the members to discuss, — such, for example, as "the nature, importance, and scriptural mode of church discipline," "the mutual duties of church members," "the relations of churches to each other," or "the relations of baptized children to the church," — closing the discussion with a statement of his own opinions, and the grounds of them; the design of the whole being, to lead his people to intelligence as to their various duties, and faithfulness in their performance.* He was a skilful guide to the inquiring and thoughtful,

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* One list of such questions, which may serve as a specimen of many, left in his own handwriting, is as follows: —

"Questions proposed to the church of Christ in Bethlem, December 24, 1767, considered and answered.

"1. Are the profession of sound doctrine, the upholding of pure worship, and the exercise of gospel discipline, the proper marks of a true church of Christ?

"2. Is it as really the indispensable duty of a Christian church faithfully to exercise discipline according to the gospel, as it is of a gospel minister to be faithful in preaching the word?

"3. Are baptized persons of adult age as well subjects of discipline as persons in full communion?

"4. To whom does it most properly belong to take the steps directed in Matt. xviii., relative to offences of a public nature, when no particular brother thinks it his duty to take them, rather than the duty of some other? And is it not a hardship, that the pastor must take the steps himself, or be obliged to nominate some one to do it, or nothing be done?

"5. Is a sincere, cordial union among the brethren, in the exercise of discipline, as really a duty, as a sincere, cordial union in the doctrines of faith, or duties of worship?

"6. In case of disunion or disagreement, is it a breach of covenant, and contrary to brotherly love, and injurious to the peace and prosperity of a church, and dishonorable to religion in general, and very provoking to Almighty God, for any member to talk against the church's doings behind their backs, and before they have taken all proper steps with the church itself?

"7. Is there the same reason that objections against the doings of a church should be exhibited to the church in writing, as that a complaint against any particular member should be in writing, viz., exactly to state, clearly to fix, and beyond dispute to ascertain, the grounds of grievance, that they may be ready for consideration by the church, and if need be, to be laid before a council?

"8. Is it a breach of covenant for a church member to side with, and endeavor to countenance and support, in opposition to the church's judgment, a person censured for heresy or scandal, previous to his exhibiting to the church, in writing, his objections against the church's judgment, and giving the church proper opportunity to consider them?

and ever ready to instruct any who applied to him, in private, in cases of conscience, and especially as to the great concern of their souls' salvation. He had an excellent talent at arranging difficulties, and preventing or healing breaches in churches; and his practical wisdom, and clear and sound judgment and discretion, were such, that he was much employed in such cases. No man was more frequently called to act in important councils, and the advice of no one was more highly prized, or frequently followed. "Throughout the entire region," says one abundantly competent to judge, "he was almost worshipped by ministers and good people;" and the remark has often been made, that the orthodoxy, purity, piety, and order, for which the churches of Litchfield county have in time past been celebrated, are attributable in no small degree to his influence, exertions, and instructions. His labors among his people were repeatedly blessed with revivals of religion, and with frequent and numerous additions to his church.

In theology, Dr. Bellamy was a thorough protestant and calvinist. Coming upon the stage of active life, at a time when Arminian views were prevalent and popular, he early took a decided stand for the great doctrines of the gospel as set forth in the Westminster confession of faith and catechisms. Even President Styles,* while saying "he was highly carried away with New Lightism in 1741," admits that "he soon recovered himself from the extravagances of those times by the friendly counsels of President Edwards, to whom he was greatly attached;" and after this, he was ever the firm friend and strong advocate of sound order and evangelical truth. Calling no man "master," diligently and prayerfully investigating the word of God for himself, and endeavoring to build all his opinions upon it, the result was his adoption, in substance, of the great system of truth held by the elder Edwards, and known as the sound theology of New England. No one can well misunderstand his

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"9. Is it a scandalous sin for a church member to side with and endeavor to support, in opposition to the church's judgment, a person censured for immorality, when it is acknowledged on all hands, even by the party censured, and by such as endeavor to support him, that he is condemned out of his own mouth?

"10. Does the gospel give authority to any one under church censure, to take the steps in Matt. xviii., with a church member, for any of his conduct, till first the beam be cast out of his own eye?

"11. Is it a practical renouncing of baptism, in a baptized person, to refuse subjection to the government which Christ has appointed in his church?

"12. May it not, in ecclesiastical as well as in civil cases, come to pass, that through length of time, scandalous crime may be so forgotten, as that it is not proper publicly to call the persons to account?"

* MS. Diary.

views, for they stand out in bold relief on every page of his works. Styles * says, "He was pretty deeply read in a limited circle of Didactic Divinity," and "but little read in Ecclesiastical History, or the Fathers," (meaning the schoolmen,) "whom he despised." But in this, as in other respects, Styles does him injustice; for an existing catalogue of his books, with comments, shows, that his reading was for that day unusually extensive and varied on general subjects, and especially in theology. With the exception of two or three divines that might be mentioned, it is doubtful if any contemporary in America was more thoroughly read in the various departments of theology than the pastor of the small church in Bethlem; and all his studies served but to confirm and strengthen his convictions, that the system he had adopted was based on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.

Dr. Bellamy is believed to have been the first minister in the state who came out publicly against the half-way covenant,† as it was called, and refused to administer the ordinance of baptism to the children of any except professedly Christian parents. His own record on this subject is, "In 1750, this practice was laid aside, [in the church in Bethlem,] as not warranted by the Holy Scriptures, there being no other scriptural owning of the covenant, but what implies a profession of godliness; they owned the *obligations* they were under to give themselves to God, but did not profess or pretend to *do* so." Many of his fragmentary papers are on this and connected subjects. One, for example, is the outline of an argument to show, that "it is a sinful thing for a minister, who professes to be a congregationalist, to baptize the children of Sabbath breakers and those who neglect family prayer" — a sentiment then almost as universally denied as it is now received.

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* MS. Dairy.

† The anecdote is related, that a few years earlier than this, when Edwards, at Northampton, had just come out against the half-way covenant, Bellamy, who had not been long settled at Bethlem, heard of it with deep interest. For he, too, without consultation with any one, had been investigating the same subject, and had come to the same conclusion Mr. E. had. Having prepared a sermon respecting it, (which he had not yet delivered,) he rode over to see Mr. Edwards, by whom he was asked to remain and preach for him. He did so, and without alluding to his intention, preached this sermon, which was a very able one, and to which Mr. E. listened with the deepest interest, part of the time leaning unconsciously forward, so as to have a view of Mr. B's face and expression — so much so as to attract the notice of the congregation. — After the service was over, both walked out together, talking with great earnestness, when, after they had gone quite a distance from the church, *Mr. Edwards found he had forgotten his hat!*

The great doctrines which Dr. Bellamy held, he extensively taught to others. By the publication of his "True Religion Delineated," he came so prominently into notice, as an able expounder of divine truth, that several young gentlemen, looking forward to the gospel ministry, applied to him to instruct and prepare them for their sacred work. His success in teaching these, led to an increase of their number; and the result was, that his dwelling became, and for years continued to be, *a theological school*, in which were trained some of the most distinguished ministers of the next generation. Dr. Bellamy probably directed the studies, in whole or part, of more candidates for the sacred office, than any other divine of our country ever did, Dr. Emmons excepted, before theological seminaries were introduced. His students he generally addressed, as "Sir John," "Sir David," — calling them by the Christian name. His mode of instruction was, to give them, from time to time, lists of questions on such subjects as the existence, attributes, and moral government of God; our moral agency, and the law under which we are placed; the sinful state and character of mankind; the need of a divine revelation, and the fact that one has been given; the great doctrines of revelation, especially of the gospel; the character, offices, and work of Christ; the atonement, and regeneration through the truth, and by the Holy Spirit; justification by faith; the distinguishing nature and fruits of repentance, love, and other Christian graces; growth in grace; the perseverance of the saints; death, the resurrection, and final judgment; heaven and hell; the nature of the church; particular churches, their officers and ordinances; the nature, uses, and ends of church discipline, etc. With carefully prepared and full questions on these and numerous other similar topics in the hands of his pupils, he directed their reading to the ablest treatises on the subject before them, and then generally spent his evenings in examining them as to their views, solving the difficulties they had found; suggesting and solving others; — closing by giving his opinion, and the reasons for it, and then leaving each student to digest and write out his own impressions of the entire subject. The dissertations thus prepared he examined, pointed out what arguments were insufficient and what satisfactory, stated the objections of opposers, and suggested the answers that would be conclusive against them. He also directed them to read the writings of the most learned and acute opposers of the truth, on the various points of investigation, and laid open to them the fallacy of their conclusions and reasonings. When his pupils, by this course of reading, conversation, and writing, had gone through with a system of theological questions, he led them to write on some of the most important points, systematically, in the form of sermons; and also,

after reading select experimental and practical discourses, to prepare sermons on similar subjects, which he revised and corrected. And that his students might be trained, not only to prepare, but properly to deliver their discourses, it was his rule that those who were licensed should preach, in turn, at appointed stations in the outskirts of the parish. On these occasions, he rode, with all his students, to attend the service; on returning from which, he usually criticized the performance, generally with reference to the peculiar character of the speaker, and always in a way not likely to be forgotten. As a specimen of his criticism, the late Dr. Hart used pleasantly to relate, that when, for the first time, it came his turn to preach, he determined, if possible, to guard himself against such criticisms as he had often heard passed on his fellow-students. To this end, he thoroughly prepared his sermon, and was, as he thought, most happy in its delivery; so that, taking all together, he felt as if his performance was almost, if not quite, above being criticized. After the service, all mounted their horses, as usual, and rode on, speaking of ordinary matters. Every moment they were expecting the doctor's comments; but he made no allusion to the subject, till they were almost home. There, not far from his house, was a field of buckwheat, so rich and luxuriant in growth as to have fallen to the ground by its own weight, so as to be almost entirely spoiled. Reining his horse square up to the fence in front of it, "Hart," said he, "do you see that buckwheat?" "Yes, sir." "Well, that's your sermon!" and without another syllable, on he rode to his house. To another of his students, who had crowded into his first discourse altogether too large a number of topics, he said, "I——, do you ever expect to preach again?" "Yes, sir. Why?" "Because, if you do, you'll have nothing left to say: you've put your whole system of theology into to-day's sermon." To another, whose manner, in speaking, was loud and boisterous, he remarked, "When I was young, I thought it was the *thunder* that killed people; but when I grew older and wiser, I found out it was the *lightning*. So I determiued to do what I advise you to — thunder less and lighten more!" To another, whose conceit had often been offensive, and who, in a dissertation he was reading before him for criticism, had several times repeated such expressions as, "This is *my* opinion," "*I* think" this, and "*I* think" that,— in his peculiar, authoritative manner, he said, "Stop, B——; *I—I—I*. Who is this *I*?" And to still another, who had been for a year or two settled in the ministry, and who was wishing he could preach as successfully as his old teacher, his comment was, "The difference between your preaching and mine is this: When I go fishing for trout, I approach the brook in silence and with caution, keeping myself entirely out of sight, and then gently

throwing my hook and line into the stream, prudently solicit a bite from some hungry fish; and I have some success. But you march directly up to the stream, and in full view of all that swim in it, throw in your line, and thresh the water with your pole, crying out, 'Bite, bite: why don't you bite?' And is it wonderful you don't take many fish?"

Nor did Dr. Bellamy confine his efforts to the intellectual improvement of his pupils. With deep seriousness he pressed upon them the indispensable importance of a heart truly devoted to the service of Christ, and a life of watchfulness, spirituality, and prayer; discoursing occasionally on the various duties, trials, comforts, and motives connected with their intended work, and conversing with each on his personal experience as a Christian, that thus his pupils might be, as far as possible, "well instructed to the kingdom of God." From hints like these, some idea may be formed of his character as an instructor; but it is impossible for those who never enjoyed his instructions justly to appreciate his peculiar talents as a theological teacher, or the ardor and diligence with which he employed them. It is one of the highest testimonies to his capacity and fidelity, that he had unbounded influence over his students, and that after they had left him, he still *retained* it permanently, and in all its force, to the end of life.

In the pulpit, Dr. Bellamy was unquestionably one of the most discriminating, eloquent, and powerful preachers ever known in this country. As one great source of his power in this respect, he dwelt almost entirely on those great truths of revelation, and especially on those distinctive doctrines of the gospel, which, from their very nature most deeply impress the human mind and heart. The existence, character, and attributes of God;* his moral government; the spirituality, extent, and claims of the divine law; the justness of its condemnation; the impossibility of our salvation by it, and yet its everlasting obligation as the rule of our conduct; — these were favorite and frequent topics of his preaching. And as connected with them, he delighted to set forth the great themes of the gospel, — our guilty and lost condition through sin; the

* The anecdote is related of Backus, the successor of Bellamy, that soon after his settlement in Bethlem, as he was one day riding out, he met an old negro, eminent for his piety, who had long attended on Bellamy's ministry, and as they were going in the same direction, fell into conversation with him. Perceiving, very soon, that he was not recognized, he asked, as a matter of curiosity, "Well, how do you like your new minister here?" "Very much," was the reply, "but he does not preach as well as massa Bellamy. Massa Bellamy, *he make God so great*, — so GREAT!" "A most just and discriminating estimate," said a minister who had often listened to Bellamy; "for of all the preachers I ever heard, Dr. B. was the most successful in making God appear *great*, — great *in his character* and *great in his government*."

atonement of Christ; the free offer of salvation to all; justification by faith; sanctification through the truth, and by the Holy Spirit; and the privilege and duty of perseverance in obedience to the end, in order to final salvation. In the sentiment of Dr. Emmons, he always gave his hearers something to attend to, and thus was always sure of their attention. His method was good. His thorough acquaintance with divine truth enabled him to instruct the understanding; and his thorough knowledge of human nature gave him ready access to the heart, and power to search the soul.* His "True Religion Delineated" was originally *preached* to his people in a course of sermons; and even now, as we read it, its argument seems utterly irresistible, while some of its appeals are fully equal to those of Baxter.† But the published sermons of Dr. Bellamy, like those of Whitefield, give us no adequate idea of his almost unequalled power in the desk, which was so great, that a distinguished jurist of another denomination, and who disliked his sentiments, declared him "the most eloquent speaker in America." Rightly to estimate this power, we must take into view the peculiar elements of his manner. His personal appearance was dignified and commanding, and his voice not only rich and varied, but so strong, and his enunciation so clear, that he could fill the largest house with the utmost ease. He had strong common sense, vast conception, perfectly clear ideas of what he wished to say, and a ready utterance to express it. All his knowledge was fully at command. His reasoning powers were great; and his manner was marked by a deep sincerity and earnestness, which were the

* As an instance of Dr. Bellamy's power of searching the hearts of his hearers by the clear presentation of truth, the following anecdote is related. In the time of the "great awakening," two young ministers in Connecticut set out in company, to travel and preach to the people; and their preaching, which was rousing and earnest, rather than instructive, was attended with much excitement. Coming to the neighborhood of Dr. B., he went to hear them preach. The people were much excited and alarmed, and the young men, greatly animated with their success, soon pronounced a number of their hearers converted. The doctor saw how matters were going; he saw the people were greatly moved; but he perceived, also, that they did not know what *reason* they had for being moved, or why they thought themselves converted; and he proposed to preach to them himself. This he did, holding up to their view the character of God, the extent and spirituality of his law, and the nature of true submission in and through Christ, as the only Savior; and the result is said to have been, that almost all these new converts were led to see themselves unconverted before they left the place. They found that they were not prepared to love and submit to a holy God; that they had been relying on their own determinations, more than on Christ; and that they were still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity. So great was the power of discriminating and faithful doctrinal preaching.

† See, for example, Section VII. pp. 286, 290, 291, etc.

offspring alike of his temperament as a man, and his piety as a Christian. His logic was kindled by a glowing imagination, and his imagination chastened and kept to the point by the discipline of his logic. When he argued, a stranger would have supposed that all his power was in argument; but when he thundered forth his application, the conclusion at once would have been, that in applying his subject was by far his greatest strength. So early as the third year of his ministry, we find Wheelock, who used to preach such "close, searching, experimental, awful, awakening" sermons, suggesting to him, by letter, that he feared his discourses were too searching and overwhelming, and such as "might beat down and discourage God's children," which is at least an evidence of their great effect. But especially, and in a high degree, the preaching of Dr. Bellamy was marked by *the dramatic element*, which is ever a source of popularity and power in the public speaker. His descriptions are pictures, and pictures in which every point and feature stand out in clear and bold relief, and with wonderful vividness, to every eye. He had all the graphic power of Bunyan, set forth with a far more powerful elocution, and directed by an intellect disciplined to an extent to which "the glorious tinker" was necessarily a stranger. "When the law was his theme," says one * who had often heard him, "Mount Sinai was all in a smoke. The thunder and lightning issued from his lips, and all was solemn as the grave. On the contrary, in the most melting strains, he would describe the sufferings of Christ, and his matchless love for sinners, and, in persuasive eloquence, invite them to be reconciled to God. With what amazing terror would he represent the torments of the damned! and in what lively pictures lay open the glories of heaven, and paint the joys of the paradise of God!" "And," says Trumbull,† describing his preaching at New Haven, "the doctor prayed and sang; then rose before a great assembly apparently full of expectation, and read Deuteronomy xxvii. 26, 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them; and all the people shall say, Amen.' The number and appearance of the people animated the preacher, and he instantly presented them with a view of the twelve tribes of Israel, assembled on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim according to the divine appointment, and the audience were made to hear the Levites distinctly reading the curses, and all the thousands of Jacob repeating them, uttering aloud their approving Amen! Twelve times, says the doctor, it goes round, round, round all the camp of Israel, 'Cursed be the man who committeth this, or that, or the other iniquity.' Nay, round it goes through all the

* Rev. Noah Benedict, in his funeral sermon.

† Trumbull's History of Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 169.

thousands of God's chosen people, 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them; and all the people shall say, Amen!' By universal consent, (the approving 'Amen' of all the congregation of Israel,) he who did not yield a cheerful and universal obedience to the whole law, was cursed. From this striking and general view of the subject, the doctor observed that it was the ancient doctrine of the church, which God took great pains to teach them, that every sin deserved the eternal curse and damnation of God, or that the wages of sin was death. Having, from a variety of views, established this leading point, that all parties might be treated fairly, he brought the objector on to the stage, to remonstrate against the doctrine he had advanced. When he had offered his objections, Gabriel was brought down to show him the futility of his objections, and the presumption and impiety of making them against the divine law and government. They were clearly answered, and the opponent was triumphantly swept from the stage. The argument gained strength and beauty through the whole progress. The deductions were solemn and important; the absolute need of an atonement that sin might be pardoned, or one of the human race saved; the impossibility of justification by the deeds of the law; the immaculate holiness and justice of God in the damnation of sinners. They were stripped naked, and their only hope and safety appeared to be an immediate flight to the city of refuge. The truths of the gospel were established, and God was glorified. No man was more thoroughly set for the defence of the gospel."

With preaching of such vivid dramatic power in view, it is not strange that the historian unconsciously calls the pulpit from which Bellamy spoke "a stage;" that he should speak of him as "an incomparable preacher, who, though he paid little attention to language, yet when warm and filled with his subject, would, from the native vigor of his soul, produce the most commanding strokes of eloquence, making his audience alive;" or that, while ranking him as "a very popular, grave, sentimental, searching, and pungent" preacher, he should add, "There is nothing to be found in his writings, though a sound and great divine, equal to what was to be seen and heard in his preaching. His pulpit talents exceeded all his other gifts, and it is difficult for any man who never heard him to form a just idea of the force and beauty [and he might have added, of the overwhelming power] "of his preaching." So great was this power, that Bellamy, when he first began itinerating, in the time of the "great awakening," was himself astonished at the effect he produced, and for a long time regarded it as the immediate and almost miraculous work of the Holy Spirit applying divine truth. Returning home, however, after repeated experience of this kind, he sat down and

devoutly inquired, "Am I right? Is it possible that the Holy Ghost so regards me, as in connection with my words and voice, to bring up a crowded congregation to their feet, or prostrate them on the floor, with wailing or joy inexpressible? I have seemed able, at such moments of overwhelming excitement and agitation, to do any thing I pleased with an audience. Can this be the work of the Holy Spirit? Can it be pleasing to Christ? Is it to salvation? No, I fear not. I feel that it must be mere *animal* excitement, and not the work of the Holy One. I will go out thus no more." — This incident, which may be relied upon as authentic,* is a testimony, of the highest kind, not only to the Christian principle and piety of Dr. Bellamy, but to the very great power of his eloquence. As another illustration of his tact and power as a preacher, it is related that soon after the late Dr. Strong was settled in Hartford, Dr. Bellamy came to his house one Friday, with the intention of spending the following Sabbath with him. At that time, Dr. B., partly from personal prejudices, and still more from his theological sentiments, was very unpopular with the dominant party in the state. And the next day, several influential members of the legislature, which was then in session, and some of the most respectable citizens of Hartford, particularly requested Dr. Strong not to invite Dr. Bellamy to preach. This Dr. Strong stated to Dr. Bellamy, and then left it with the latter to preach or not, as he thought best. "I will preach," said Dr. B., with a smile; "and don't be concerned, Strong, for I shall please them all." He did preach, and in the forenoon of the Sabbath, he described, in his peculiar, glowing style, the virtue and happiness of the millennium, and was listened to by the audience with the most evident delight. At the close of the sermon, he remarked to them, that they might perhaps wonder how so great a change in the character of man could be effected, adding, if they would attend in the afternoon, he would tell them. In the afternoon, after alluding to his promise, he told them that the manner in which this change was to be effected was described in the Gospel according to John, the first chapter and thirteenth verse, which he had selected for his text — "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The great theological question at issue in that day was, "whether men are regenerated by light, or by the special influence of the Holy Spirit." The former side of the question was embraced by the men who were unwilling that

* The statement was made by Dr. Bellamy himself to one of his students, by whom it was repeated to the venerable Dr. Chapin, from whom the writer received it.

Dr. B. should preach. And their error was combated by the preacher with great force of argument, and the truth defended by the most commanding eloquence. The result was, that the very men, who, on Saturday, had requested that Dr. Bellamy might not be invited to preach, notwithstanding their former prejudices, and although the preacher had assaulted and carried their favorite position, were about on Monday morning with a subscription paper, to have the sermons he had delivered printed!

As a writer and controversialist, Dr. Bellamy was strong, clear, scriptural, and conclusive. His style is spirited, but as was very common in his day, tautologous, and defective in its rhetoric. But if his "mental Samsonism" was often destitute of refinement and polish, it was always ready to bear off the gates or shake down the pillars of error. No man is more candid and bold in stating in their full force the objections of opposers, and no one more prompt or mighty to beat them down with the sturdy blows of truth. His reasoning is rigid logic; and though it is at times interrupted by pointed and powerful appeals, which seem forced from him as involuntary tributes to the majesty of truth, yet he never loses sight of his point, or wanders from it. His "Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin" is eminently his characteristic, and perhaps, on the whole, his ablest work. Both this and his "True Religion Delineated" are deep, thorough, and masterly vindications of the great doctrines of the Bible. Both display to advantage his great reasoning powers. In both, truth is constantly presented in vivid dramatic form;* and both are marked throughout by passages of searching power, and of exceeding tenderness and beauty.†

The works of Dr. Bellamy, published in his lifetime, are as follows:—

1. "True Religion Delineated," etc. This is generally regarded as his great work. Fully to appreciate it, we must consider the age in which it was written, in which Arminian views were extensively prevalent. This work was read at Princeton, among the students, and was greatly instrumental in promoting the revival of religion there in 1772,‡ as it was blessed of God to the same end, in various parts of the land, soon after its publication. It has often been republished in Great Britain, and in this country. It was first published in 1750.

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* See, for example, vol. i. pp. 50, 83, 91, 103, and 104, and vol. ii. pp. 17 and 94.

† See, for example, vol. ii. pp. 52, 53.

‡ A letter from New Jersey, in 1772, says, "The college has been visited again in a remarkable manner by the Spirit of God. Mr. Edwards's sentiments make surprising progress there." It also mentions the fact above stated, as to the influence of the "True Religion Delineated."

2. "The Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin." As already said, this, if not his ablest, is his characteristic work. It was first published in 1758.

3. "A Vindication of the Wisdom of God," etc.; in answer to a pamphlet attacking the previous work.

4. "Theron, Paulinus, and Aspasio; or, Letters and Dialogues on the Nature of Love to God, Faith in Christ, and Assurance of a Title to Eternal Life. 1758, '59.

5. "Letter to Scripturista." 1759.

6. "An Essay on the Nature and Glory of the Gospel;" designed as a supplement to the Letters and Dialogues. 1762.

7. "A Blow at the Root of Antinomianism." 1763.

8. "But one Covenant." 1769.

9. "A Strict and Careful Examination of the External Covenant." 1769.

10. "Four Dialogues on the Half-way Covenant." 1769.

11. A number of occasional sermons: "Early Piety recommended," 1747; "The Great Evil of Sin," 1753; "The Law our Schoolmaster," 1756; "The Divinity of Christ," 1758; "The Millennium," 1758; "An Election Sermon," 1762.

Besides the above works, Dr. Bellamy left very numerous manuscripts, — skeletons of sermons, and unfinished papers on various important subjects; such, for example, as "The Necessity, Nature, and Sufficiency of Christ's Atonement;" "The Nature and Design of John's (the Baptist) Ministry;" "Who are the Seed of Abraham?" "In what Sense, and with what Propriety, the Infant Children of Visible Christians are said to be included in the Covenant of Grace;" "On Church Discipline;" a long dissertation on "Faith;" a still longer one on "Repentance;" and still another, on the "Consistency between the Right of Private Judgment and Ecclesiastical Power," etc. etc. etc.

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TRUE RELIGION DELINEATED;

OR,

EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION,

AS DISTINGUISHED FROM FORMALITY ON THE ONE HAND, AND ENTHUSIASM IN THE OTHER,

SET IN A SCRIPTURAL AND RATIONAL LIGHT,

IN TWO DISCOURSES.

PREFACE.

THE being of GOD is reckoned the first, greatest, and most fundamental of all things that are the objects of knowledge or belief; and next to that must be reckoned the nature of that religion which God requires of us, and must be found in us, in order to our enjoying the benefits of his favor; or rather, this may be esteemed of like importance with the other; for it in like manner concerns us to know how we may honor and please God, and be accepted of him, as it concerns us to know that he has a being. This is a point of infinite consequence to every single person; each one having to do with God as his supreme judge, who will fix his eternal state according as he finds him to be with or without true religion. And this is also a point that vastly concerns the public interests of the church of God.

It is very apparent, that the want of a thorough distinction in this matter, through the defect either of sufficient discernment or care, has been the chief thing that has obscured, obstructed, and brought to a stand, all remarkable revivals of religion which have been since the beginning of the reformation; the very chief reason why the most hopeful and promising beginnings have never come to any more than beginnings; being nipped in the bud, and soon followed with a great increase of stupidity, corrupt principles, a profane and atheistical spirit, and the triumph of the open enemies of religion. And from hence, and from what has been so evident, from time to time, in these latter ages of the church, and from the small acquaintance I have with the history of preceding times, I cannot but think, that if the events which have appeared from age to age, should be carefully examined and considered, it

would appear that it has been thus in all ages of the Christian church from the beginning.

They, therefore, who bring any addition of light to this great subject — the nature of true religion, and its distinction from all counterfeits — should be accepted as doing the greatest possible service to the church of God. And attempts to this end ought not to be despised and discouraged, under a notion that it is but vanity and arrogance in such as are lately sprung up in an obscure part of the world, to pretend to add any thing, on this subject, to the informations we have long since received from their fathers, who have lived in former times, in New England, and more noted countries. We cannot suppose that the church of God is already possessed of all that light, in things of this nature, that ever God intends to give it; nor that all Satan's lurking-places have already been found out. And must we let that grand adversary alone in his devices, to insnare and ruin the souls of men, and confound the interest of religion amongst us, without attempting to know any thing further of his wiles than others have told us, though we see every day the most fatal effects of his hitherto unobserved snares, for fear we shall be guilty of vanity, or want of modesty, in attempting to discern any thing that was not fully observed by our betters in former times; and that whatever peculiar opportunities God gives us, by special dispensations of his providence, to see some things that were overlooked by them?

The remarkable things that have come to pass in late times respecting the state of religion, I think, will give every wise observer great reason to determine that the counterfeits of the grace of God's spirit are many more than have been generally taken notice of heretofore; and that, therefore, we stand in great need of having the certain and distinguishing nature and marks of genuine religion more clearly and distinctly set forth than has been usual; so that the difference between that and every thing that is spurious may be more plainly and surely discerned, and safely determined.

As inquiries of this nature are very important and necessary in themselves, so they are what the present state of religion in New England, and other parts of the British dominions, do in a peculiar manner render necessary at this season; and also do give

peculiar opportunity for discoveries beyond what has been for a long time. Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light, has shown himself in many of his artifices more plainly than ordinary; and given us opportunity to see more clearly and exactly the difference between his operations, and the saving operations and fruits of the spirit of Christ; and we should be much to blame, if we did not improve such an advantage.

The author of the ensuing treatise has not been negligent of these opportunities. He has not been an unwary or undiscerning observer of events that have occurred these ten years past. From the intimate acquaintance with him which I have been favored with for many years, I have abundant reason to be satisfied that what has governed him in this publication, is no vanity of mind, no affectation to appear in the world as an author, nor any desire of applause; but a hearty concern for the glory of God, and the kingdom and interest of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ; and that as to the main things he here insists on, as belonging to the distinguishing nature and essence of true religion, he declares them not only as being satisfied of them, from a careful consideration of important facts, which he has had great opportunity to observe, and very clear experience in his own soul; but the most diligent search of the Holy Scriptures, and strict examination of the nature of things; and that his determinations concerning the nature of genuine religion, here exhibited to the world, have not been settled and published by him without long consideration, and maturely weighing all objections which could be thought of, taking all opportunities to hear what could be said by all sorts of persons against the principles here laid down, from time to time conversing freely and friendly with gentlemen in the Arminian scheme, having also had much acquaintance, and frequent and long conversation with many of the people called Separatists, their preachers, and others.

And I cannot but express my sincere wishes, that what is here written by this reverend and pious author, may be taken notice of, read without prejudice, and thoroughly considered; as I verily believe, from my own perusal, it will be found a discourse wherein the proper essence and distinguishing nature of saving religion is deduced from the first principles of the

oracles of God in a manner tending to a great increase of light in this infinitely important subject — discovering truth, and, at the same time, showing the grounds of it, or showing what things are true, and also why they are true — manifesting the mutual dependence of the various parts of the true scheme of religion, and also the foundation of the whole — things being reduced to their first principles in such a manner, that the connection and reason of things, as well as their agreement with the word of God, may be easily seen; and the true source of the dangerous errors concerning the terms of God's favor and qualifications for heaven, which are prevailing at this day, is plainly discovered; showing their falsehood at the very foundation, and their inconsistence with the very first principles of the religion of the Bible.

Such a discourse as this is very seasonable at this day; and although the author, as he declares, has aimed especially at the benefit of persons of vulgar capacity; and so has not labored for such ornaments of style and language as might best suit the taste of men of polite literature; yet the matter or substance that is to be found in this discourse, is what, I trust, will be very entertaining and profitable to every serious and impartial reader, whether learned or unlearned.

JONATHAN EDWARDS.

NORTHAMPTON, *August*, 4, 1750.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

We are designed, by God our Maker, for an endless existence. In this present life we just enter upon being, and are in a state introductory to a never-ending duration in another world, where we are to be forever unspeakably happy or miserable, according to our present conduct. This is designed for a state of probation, and that for a state of rewards and punishments. We are now upon trial, and God's eye is upon us every moment; and that picture of ourselves, which we exhibit in our conduct, the whole of it taken together, will give our proper character, and determine our state forever. This being designed for a state of trial, God now means to try us, that our conduct, under all the trials of life, may discover what we are, and ripen us for the day of judgment; when God will judge every man according to his works, and render to every one according to his doings. He does not intend, in the dispensations of his providence, to suit things to a state of ease and enjoyment, which is what this life is not designed for; but to a state of trial: he puts men into trying circumstances of set purpose, and, as it were, contrives methods to try them. One great end he has in view is, that he may prove them, and know what is in their hearts.

He did not lead the children of Israel directly from Egypt to Canaan, but first through the Red Sea, and then out into a wilderness, where there was neither water, nor bread, nor flesh; and made them wander there forty years, that he might "try them, and prove them, and know what was in their hearts."

So when the Christian religion was introduced into the world, it was not in such a way as men would have chosen, but in a manner suited to a state of trial. The Son of God did not come in outward glory, but in the form of a servant; not to reign as an earthly prince, but to die upon the cross; and his apostles made but a mean appearance in the eyes of the world; and that sect was every where spoken against, and persecuted; and many were the stumbling-blocks of the times; and these things were to try the temper of mankind. And when Christian churches were erected by the indefatigable labors of St. Paul and others, that God might thoroughly try every heart, he not only suffered the wicked world to rise in arms against them, but also let Satan loose, to transform himself into an angel of light, and, as it were, to inspire, and send forth his ministers, transformed into the apostles of Christ, to vent heretical doctrines, and foment strife and division. In the mean while, the secure and wicked world looked on, pleased, no doubt, to see their debates and divisions, and glad they could have such a handle against Christianity, and so good a plea to justify their infidelity; and God delighted to have things under circumstances so perfectly well adapted to a state of trial. He loved to try the apostles, to see how they would be affected and act; when not only the world was in arms against them, but many of their own converts turned to be their enemies too, by the influence of false teachers. He loved to try private Christians, to see how their hearts would be affected towards the truths of the gospel, and the true ministers of Christ, and towards their temporal interest, while the truths of the gospel were denied or perverted, and the true ministers of Christ despised and stigmatized by heretics, and their temporal interest exposed to the rage of a wicked, merciless world; and he loved to try hypocrites, to see whether they would not renounce the truth they pretended so highly to value, and become disaffected towards the ministers of Christ they seemed so dearly to love, and follow false teachers, or fall off to the world.

It is reasonable and fit, and a thing becoming and beautiful,

that beings in a state of probation should be tried; and God looks upon the present outward ease and comfort even of his own people, as a matter of no importance, compared with things spiritual and eternal. Eternity, with all its importance, lies open to his view; and time appears as a point, and all its concerns as things comparatively of no worth. If the wicked are in prosperity, and the righteous in adversity, or all things come alike to all, God is well pleased, because things of time are of so little importance, and because such an administration of things is suited to a state of trial. There will be time enough hereafter for the righteous to be rewarded, and the wicked punished. In this view of things, we may, in a measure, understand the darkest, and account for the most mysterious, dispensations of divine Providence, and discern the wisdom of the divine government.

It has doubtless appeared as a thing strange and dark to many pious persons, and occasioned not a little perplexity of mind, to observe what has come to pass in New England since the year 1740. That there should be so general an outpouring of the Spirit — so many hundreds and thousands awakened all over the country, and such an almost universal external reformation, and so many receive the word with joy; and yet, after all, things come to be as they now are; so many fallen away to carnal security, and so many turned enthusiasts and heretics, and the country so generally settled in their prejudices against experimental religion and the doctrines of the gospel, and a flood of Arminianism and immorality, ready to deluge the land; but, as strange and dark as it may have seemed, yet doubtless if any of us had lived with the Israelites in the wilderness, or in the three first ages after Christ, or in the time of the reformation from Popery, the dispensations of divine Providence would, upon the whole, have appeared much more mysterious than they do now. And yet those were times when God was doing glorious things for his church. And indeed, it has happened in our day, however strange it may seem to us, no otherwise than our Savior foretold it commonly would under the gospel dispen-

sation, at least till Satan is bound, that he may deceive the nations no more. The sower goes forth to sow, and some seed falls by the way-side, and some on stony, and some on thorny, and some on good ground; and while he is sowing good seed, an enemy, in the night, the devil, unobserved, sows tares; now, when the sun is up, that is, when new times come on, and trials approach, the main of the seed is lost; not only what fell by the way-side, but also what fell on the stony and thorny ground. And when the good ground is about to bring forth fruit, the tares begin to appear too. (Matt. xiii.) Thus it has always been. This is a state of trial, and God has permitted so many sad and awful things to happen in times of reformation, with design to prove the children of men, and know what is in their hearts.

The young people almost all over New England professed they would forever renounce youthful vanities, and seek the Lord. "Well," God, in the course of his providence, as it were, says, "I will try you." Seeming converts expressed great love to Christ, his truths, and ministers, and ways. "Well," says God, "I will try you." Multitudes, being enemies to all true religion, longed to see the whole reformation fall into disgrace, and things return to their own channel; and they sought for objections and stumbling-blocks. "Well," says God, "you may have them, and I will try and see how you will be affected, and what you will say, and whether you will be as glad when the cause of my Son is betrayed by the miscarriages of those that profess to be his friends, as the Jews of old were, when my Son himself was betrayed into their hands by Judas." Thus God means to try every one.

A compassionate sense of the exercises, which godly persons, especially among common people, might be under, in these evil days, while some are fallen away, and others are clapping their hands and rejoicing with all their hearts to see Zion laid waste; while Arminians are glossing their scheme, and appealing to reason and common sense, as though their principles were near or quite self-evident to all men of thought and candor; and

while enthusiasts are going about as men inspired and immediately sent by the Almighty, pretending to extraordinary sanctity, and bold in it that they are so holy in themselves, and so entirely on the Lord's side, that all godly people must, and cannot but, see as they do, and fall in with them, unless they are become blind, dead, and carnal, and gotten back into the world; a compassionate sense, I say, of the exercises of mind, which pious persons among common people might have, in such a trying situation of things, was the first motive which excited me to enter upon this work, which I now offer to the public; and to make divine truths plain to such, and to strip error naked before their eyes, that they might be established, and comforted, and quickened in their way heavenward, was the end I had in view; and, accordingly, I have labored very much to adapt myself to the lowest capacities, not meaning to write a book for the learned and polite, but for common people, and especially for those who are godly among them.

To these, therefore, that they may read what I have written with the greater profit, I will offer these two directions:—

1. Labor after determinate ideas of God, and a sense of his infinite glory. This will spread a light over all the duties and doctrines of religion, and help you to understand the law and the gospel, and to pry into the mysteries, and discern the beauties, of the divine government. By much the greatest part of what I have written, besides showing what God is, consists in but so many propositions deduced from the divine perfections. Begin here, therefore, and learn what God is, and then what the moral law is; and this will help you to understand what our ruin is, and what the way of our recovery by free grace through Jesus Christ. The Bible is designed for rational creatures, and has God for its author; and you may therefore depend upon it, that it contains a scheme perfectly rational, divine, and glorious; and the pleasure of divine knowledge will a thousand times more than recompense all our reading, study, and pains; only content not yourselves with a general superficial knowledge, but enter thoroughly into things.

2. Practise, as well as read. The end of reading and knowledge is practice; and holy practice will help you to understand what you read. Love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself; and you cannot but understand me, while, in the first discourse, I show what is implied in these two great commands; and practise repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and the second discourse, which treats of the nature of the gospel, and a genuine compliance therewith, will naturally become plain and easy; and while you daily study divine truths in your heads, and digest them well in your hearts, and practise them in your lives, your knowledge and holiness will increase, and God's word and providence be better understood, your perplexing difficulties will be more solved, and you be established, strengthened, and comforted, in your way heavenward; and your light shining before men, they will see your good works, and your Father which is in heaven will be glorified — all which are the hearty desire and prayer of

Your servant in Jesus Christ,

JOSEPH BELLAMY.

BETHLEHEM, *April* 25, 1750.

TRUE RELIGION DELINEATED.

DISCOURSE I.

SHOWING THE NATURE OF THE DIVINE LAW, AND WHEREIN CONSISTS A REAL CONFORMITY TO IT.

JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND. THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE UNTO IT, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF. ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS HANG ALL THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

Matthew xxii. 37—40.

THE INTRODUCTION.

TRUE religion consists in a conformity to the law of God, and in a compliance with the gospel of Christ. The religion of innocent man consisted only in a conformity to the law — the law of nature, with the addition of one positive precept; he had no need of gospel-grace. But when man lost his innocency, and became guilty and depraved; when he fell under the wrath of God and power of sin, he needed a Redeemer and a Sanctifier; and in the gospel, a Redeemer and a Sanctifier are provided, and a way for our obtaining pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace is opened; a compliance with which does now, therefore, become part of the religion of a fallen creature. Now, if we can but rightly understand the law, and rightly understand the gospel, we may easily see wherein a conformity to the one, and a compliance with the other, does consist; and so, what true religion is.

For the present, let us take the law under consideration. And it will be proper to inquire into these following particulars: 1. What duty does God require of us in his law? — 2. From what motives must that duty be done? — 3. What is that

precise measure of duty which God requires in his law? And a short, but very clear and plain answer to all these questions we have before us in our text; which is the words of our blessed Savior, and in which he does upon design declare what the sum and substance of the law is. He had a question put to him in these words: "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" To which he answers, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, etc.; this is the first. The second is like unto it," etc. The ten commandments are summed up in these two; and every duty enjoined in the law, and inculcated in the prophets, is but a deduction from these two, in which all are radically contained. A thorough understanding of these two will therefore give us an insight into all. Let us now, therefore, begin with taking the first of these into particular consideration: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc. Here is, 1. The duty required, — *Love to God.* 2. The grounds and reasons of the duty intimated — *Because he is the Lord our God.* 3. The measure of duty required — *With all thy heart*, etc.

In discoursing upon these words, I will therefore endeavor to show,

I. What is implied in love to God.
II. From what motives we are required to love him.
III. What is the measure of love which is required.

SECTION I.

SHOWING WHAT IS IMPLIED IN LOVE TO GOD.

I AM to show what is implied in love to God.

And,

1. *A true knowledge of God* is implied; for this lays the foundation of love. A spiritual sight of God, and a sense of his glory and beauty, begets love. When he that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in our hearts, and gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; and when we, with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, then we are changed into the same image: the temper and frame of our hearts become like God's, to speak after the manner of men: we begin to feel towards God, in a measure, as he does towards himself; that is, to love him with all our

hearts. (2 Cor. iii. 18;. iv. 6.) For now we begin to perceive the grounds and reasons of that infinite esteem he has of himself, and infinite complacency in himself, and why he commands all the world to love and adore him. And the same grounds and reasons which move him thus to love himself, and command all the world to do so too, enkindle the divine flame in our hearts. When we see God, in a measure, such as he sees himself to be, and have a sense of his glory and beauty in being what he is, in a measure, as he himself has, then we begin to love him with the same kind of love, and from the same motives, as he himself does; only in an infinitely inferior degree. This sight and sense of God discovers the grounds of love to him. We see why he requires us to love him, and why we ought to love him — how right and fit it is; and so we cannot but love him.

This true knowledge of God supposes, that, in a measure, we see God to be just such a one as he is; and, in a measure, have a sense of his infinite glory and beauty in being such. For if our apprehensions of God are not right, it is not God we love, but only a false image of him framed in our own fancy.* And if we have not a sense of his glory and beauty

* How false and dangerous, therefore, is that principle, "That it is no matter what men's principles are, if their lives be but good." Just as if that external conformity to the law might be called a good life, which does not proceed from a genuine love to God in the heart! or just as if a man might have a genuine love to God in his heart, without having right apprehensions of him! or just as if a man might have right apprehensions of God, let his apprehensions be what they will! Upon this principle, heathens, Jews, and Mahometans, may be saved as well as Christians. And upon this principle, the heathen nations need not much trouble themselves to know which is the right God among all the gods that are worshipped in the world; for it is no matter which God they think is the true, if their lives are but good. But why has God revealed himself in his word, if right apprehensions of God be a matter of such indifference in religion? and why did St. Paul take such pains to convert the heathen nations to Christianity, and so much fill up his epistles to them afterwards with doctrinal points, and be so strenuous as to say, "If an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel, let him be accursed," if right apprehensions of God, and right principles of religion, be a matter of such indifference? — It is strange that such a notion should be ever once mentioned by any that pretend to be Christians, since it is subversive of the whole Christian religion; making Christianity no safer a way to heaven than paganism. Yea, such a principle naturally tends to make all those who imbibe it, leave love to God and faith in Christ out of their religion, and quiet themselves with a mere empty form of external duties; or, in other words, it tends to make them leave the law and the gospel out of their religion, and quiet themselves with mere heathen morality; for a man cannot attain to love to God and faith in Christ, without right apprehensions of God and Christ; or, in other words, a man cannot attain to a real conformity to the law, and to a genuine compliance with the gospel, unless his principles respecting the law and gospel are right: but a man may attain to a good life, externally, let his apprehensions of God and Christ, of law and gospel, and all his principles of religion, be what they will. Let him be a heathen, or Jew, a Mahometan, or Christian; yea, if a man be an

in being what he is, it is impossible we should truly love and esteem him for being such. To love God for being what he is, and yet not to have any sense of his glory and beauty in being such, implies a contradiction; for it supposes we have a sense of his glory and beauty when we have not; a sense of the beauty and amiableness of any object being always necessarily implied in love to it. Where no beauty or amiableness is seen, there can be no love. Love cannot be forced. Forced love is no love. If we are obliged to try to force ourselves to love any body, it is a sign they are very odious in our eyes, or at least that we see no beauty or amiableness in them, no form or comeliness, wherefore we should desire or delight in them. (Cant. viii. 7.) In all cases, so far as we see beauty, so far we love, and no further.

Most certainly that knowledge of God which is necessary to lay a foundation of genuine love to him, implies not only right apprehensions of what he is, but also a sense of his glory and beauty in being such; for such a knowledge of God as consists merely in speculation, let it rise ever so high, and be ever so clear, will never move us to love him. Mere speculation, where there is no sense of beauty, will no sooner fill the heart with love, than a looking-glass will be filled with love by the image of a beautiful countenance, which looks into it; and a mere speculative knowledge of God, will not, cannot, beget a sense of his beauty in being what he is, when there is naturally no disposition in our hearts to account him glorious in being such, but wholly to the contrary. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." When natures are in perfect contrariety, the one sinful, and the other holy, the more they are known to each other, the more is mutual hatred stirred up, and their entire aversion to each other becomes more sensible. The more they know of one another, the greater is their dislike, and the plainer do they feel it. Doubtless the fallen angels have a great degree of speculative knowledge; they have a very clear sight and great sense of what God is; but the more they know of God, the more they hate him;

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atheist, he may live a good life externally; for any man has sufficient power to do every external duty; and it is many times much to men's honor and worldly interest to appear righteous outwardly before men.

N. B. What is here said may, with a little alteration, be as well applied to some other sorts of men. So the Moravians say, "they care not what men's principles are, if they do but love the Savior." So, in New England, there are multitudes who care little or nothing what doctrines men believe, if they are but full of flaming zeal. Just as if it were no matter what kind of Savior we frame an idea of, if we do but love him; nor what we are zealous about, if we are but flaming hot.

that is, their hatred and aversion is stirred up the more, and they feel it plainer. So, awakened sinners, when under deep and thorough conviction, have comparatively a very clear sight and great sense of God; but it only makes them see and feel their native enmity, which before lay hid. A sight and sense of what God is, makes them see and feel what his law is, and so what their duty is, and so what their sinfulness is; and so what their danger is; it makes the commandment come, and so sin revives, and they die. The clearer sight and the greater sense they have of what God is, the more plainly do they perceive that perfect contrariety between his nature and theirs: their aversion to God becomes discernible; they begin to see what enemies they are to him: and so the secret hypocrisy there has been in all their pretences of love, is discovered; and so their high conceit of their goodness, and all their hopes of finding favor in the sight of God upon the account of it, cease, die away, and come to nothing. "Sin revived and I died." The greater sight and sense they have of what God is, the plainer do they feel that they have no love to him, but the greatest aversion; for the more they know of God, the more their native enmity is stirred up. So, again, as soon as ever an unregenerate sinner enters into the world of spirits, where he has a much clearer sight and greater sense of what God is, immediately his native enmity works to perfection, and he blasphemes like a very devil; and that although perhaps he died full of seeming love and joy. As the Galatians, who once loved Paul, so as that they could even have plucked out their eyes and have given them to him, yet, when afterwards they came to know more clearly what kind of man he was, then they turned his enemies. And so, finally, all the wicked, at the day of judgment, when they shall see very clearly what God is, will thereby only have all the enmity of their hearts stirred to perfection. From all which it is exceedingly manifest, that the clearest speculative knowledge of God is so far from bringing an unholy heart to love God, that it will only stir up the more aversion; and therefore that knowledge of God which lays the foundation of love, must imply not only right apprehensions of what God is, but also a sense of his glory and beauty in being such.*

* I grant that if all our enmity against God arise merely from our conceiving him to be our enemy, then a manifestation of his love to our souls will cause our enmity to cease, and bring us to love him; nor will there be any need of a sense of the moral excellency of his nature to produce it; and so there will be no need of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. A manifestation of the love of God to our souls will effectually change us; and thus

Wicked men and devils may know what God is, but none but holy beings have any sense of his infinite glory and beauty in being such; which *sense* in Scripture language, is called *seeing* and *knowing*. "Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him." "He that doeth evil hath not seen God." "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Because wicked men have no sense of his glory and beauty, therefore they are said not to know God; for all knowledge without this is vain; it is but the form of knowledge. It will never enkindle divine love. And, in Scripture, sinners are said to be blind, because, after all their light and knowledge, they have no sense of God's glory in being what he is, and so have no heart to love him. And hence also they are said to be dead. They know nothing of the ineffable glory of the divine nature, and the love of God is not in them. (John v. 42; viii. 19, 55.)

2. Another thing implied in love to God is *esteem*. Esteem, strictly speaking, is that high and exalted thought of, and value for, any thing which arises from a sight and sense of its own intrinsic worth, excellency, and beauty. So, a sense of the infinite dignity, greatness, glory, excellency, and beauty of the most high God, begets in us high and exalted thoughts of him, and makes us admire, wonder, and adore. Hence the heavenly hosts fall down before the throne, and, under a sense of his ineffable glory, continually cry, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of thy glory." And saints here below, while they behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are ravished; they esteem, they admire, they wonder, and adore; and, under some feebler sense of the ineffable glory of the divine nature, they begin to feel as they do in heaven, and to speak their language, and say, "Who is a God like unto thee! thy name alone is excellent, and thy glory is exalted above the heavens."

This high esteem of God disposes and inclines the heart to acquiesce, yea, to exult, in all the high prerogatives God assumes to himself.

God, from a consciousness of his own infinite excellency, his entire right to, and absolute authority over, all things, is disposed to take state to himself, and honor, and majesty, the

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a man may be under great terrors from a sense of the wrath of God, and may see the enmity of his heart in this sense; and may afterwards have, as he thinks, great manifestations of the love of God, and be filled with love and joy; and after all, never truly see the plague of his own heart, nor have his nature renewed: and a man's having experienced such a false conversion, naturally leads him to frame wrong notions of religion, and blinds his mind against the truth. Many of the Antinomian principles take rise from this quarter.

kingdom, the power, and the glory; and he sets up himself as the most high God, supreme Lord, and sovereign Governor of the whole world, and bids all worlds adore him, and be in a most perfect subjection to him, and that with all their hearts; and esteems the wretch, who does not account this his highest happiness, worthy of eternal damnation. God thinks it infinitely becomes him to set up himself for a God, and to command all the world to adore him, upon pain of eternal damnation. He thinks himself fit to govern the world, and that the throne is his proper place, and that all love, honor, and obedience are his due. "I am the Lord," says he, "and besides me there is no God. I am the Lord; that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another. And thus and thus shall ye do, for I am the Lord. And cursed be every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Now, it would be infinitely wicked for the highest angel in heaven to assume any of this honor to himself; but it infinitely becomes the most high God thus to do. And when we see his infinite dignity, greatness, glory, and excellency, and begin rightly to esteem him, then his conduct, in all this, will begin to appear infinitely right and fit, and so infinitely beautiful and ravishing, and worthy to be rejoiced and exulted in. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."

And a sight and sense of the supreme, infinite glory and excellency of the divine nature, will not only make us glad that he is God, and King, and Governor, but also exceedingly glad that we live under his government, and are to be his subjects and servants, and to be at his disposal. It will show us the grounds and reasons of his law; how infinitely right and fit it is that we should love him with all our hearts, and obey him in every thing; how infinitely unfit and wrong the least sin is, and how just the threatened punishment: and, at the same time, it will help us to see that all the nations of the earth are as a drop of the bucket, or small dust of the balance, before him; and that we ourselves are nothing, and less than nothing, in his sight. So that a right sight and sense of the supreme, infinite glory of God, will make us esteem him, so as to be glad that he is on the throne, and we at his footstool; that he is king, and we his subjects; that he rules and reigns, and that we are absolutely in subjection, and absolutely at his disposal. In a word, we shall be glad to see him take all that honor to himself which he does, and shall be heartily reconciled to his government, and cordially willing to take our own proper places; and hereby a foundation will begin to be laid in our

hearts for all things to come to rights. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be brought down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted." And that all is implied in a genuine love to God, not only the reason of the thing and the plain tenor of Scripture manifest, but it is self-evident; for if we do not so esteem God as to be thus glad to have him take his place, and we ours, it argues secret dislike, and proves that there is secret rebellion in our hearts. Thus, therefore, must we esteem the glorious God, or be reputed rebels in his sight.

3. Another thing implied in love to God may be called *benevolence.* When we are acquainted with any person, and he appears very excellent in our eyes, and we highly esteem him, it is natural now heartily to wish him well; we are concerned for his interest; we are glad to see it go well with him, and sorry to see it go ill with him; and ready at all times cheerfully to do what we can to promote his welfare. Thus Jonathan felt towards David; and thus love to God will make us feel towards him, his honor, and interest in the world. When God is seen in his infinite dignity, greatness, glory, and excellency, as the most high God, supreme Lord, and sovereign Governor of the whole world, and a sense of his infinite worthiness is hereby raised in our hearts, this enkindles a holy benevolence, the natural language of which is, "Let God be glorified." "And be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth."

This holy disposition sometimes expresses itself in earnest longings that God would glorify himself, and honor his great name; and bring all the world into an entire subjection to him. And hence this is the natural language of true love: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." And hence, when God is about to bring to pass great and glorious things to the honor of his great name, it causes great joy and rejoicing. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."

And hence, again, when God seems to be about to do or permit any thing, which, as it seems to us, tends most certainly to bring reproach and dishonor upon his great name, it occasions

the greatest anguish and distress. Thus says God to Moses, "This is a stiff-necked people; let me alone that I may destroy them in a moment; and I will make of thee a great nation." "But," says Moses, "what will become of thy great name? What will the Egyptians say? And what will all the nations round about say?" And he mourns and wrestles, cries and prays, begs and pleads, as if his heart would break; and says he, "If I may not be heard, but this dishonor and reproach must come upon thy great name, it cannot comfort me to tell me of making of me a great nation; pray let me rather die and be forgotten forever, and let not my name be numbered among the living; but let it be blotted out of thy book." "Well," says God, "I will hear thee. But, as truly as I live, I will never put up with these affronts; but the whole world shall know what a holy and sin-hating God I am, and be filled with my glory; for the carcasses of all those who have treated me thus shall fall in the wilderness; and here they shall wander till forty years are accomplished, and then I will do so and so to their children, and so secure the honor of my power, truth, and faithfulness." And now Moses is content to live in the wilderness, and do, and suffer, and undergo any thing, if God will, but take care of his great name. (Exod. xxxii. Num. xiv.) And as it is distressing to a true lover of God, to see God's name, and works, and ways, fall into reproach and contempt; and as, on the other hand, there is no greater joy than to see God glorify himself, (Exod. xv.) hence this world, even on this account, may be fitly called a vale of tears to the people of God, because here they are always seeing reproach and contempt cast upon God, his name, his works, and his ways. And hence, at the day of judgment, all these tears shall be wiped from their eyes, because then they shall see all things turned to the advancement of the glory of his great name, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

Again, this divine benevolence, or wishing that God may be glorified, sometimes expresses itself in earnest longings that all worlds might join together to bless and praise the name of the Lord; and it appears infinitely fit and right, and so infinitely beautiful and ravishing, that the whole intelligent creation should forever join in the most solemn adoration; yea, and that sun, moon, stars; earth, air, sea; birds, beasts, fishes; mountains and hills, and all things, should, in their way, display the divine perfections, and praise the name of the Lord, because his name alone is excellent, and his glory is exalted above the heavens. And hence the pious Psalmist so often breathes this divine language: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength,

that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord; praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights. Praise him, all ye his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent." (Psalms xcv. xcvi. xcvii. xcviii.)

Lastly, from this divine benevolence arises a free and genuine disposition to consecrate and give up ourselves entirely to the Lord forever — to walk in all his ways, and keep all his commands, seeking his glory; for if we desire that God may be glorified, we shall naturally be disposed to seek his glory. A sight and sense of the infinite dignity, greatness, glory, and excellency of God, the great Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the world, who has entire right unto, and an absolute authority over, all things, makes it appear infinitely fit that all things should be for him, and him alone; and that we should be entirely for him, and wholly devoted to him; and that it is infinitely wrong to live to ourselves, and make our own interest our last end. The same views which make the godly earnestly long to have God glorify himself, and to have all the world join to give him glory, thoroughly engage them for their parts to live to God. After David had called upon all others to bless the Lord, he concludes with, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." And this is the language of heaven. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." And it was their maxim in the apostles' days, whether they ate or drank, or whatever they did, all must be done to the glory of God. And it was their way not to live to themselves, but to the Lord. Yea, whether they lived, to live to the Lord; or whether they died, to die to the Lord. This was what they commended. (Phil. ii. 20, 21.) And this was what they enjoined, as that in which the very spirit of true religion consisted. (Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Rom. xii. 1; vii. 4.)

All rational creatures, acting as such, are always influenced by motives in their whole conduct. Those things are always the most powerful motives which appear to us most worthy of our choice. The principal motive to an action, is always the ultimate end of the action; hence, if God, his honor, and interest, appear to us as the supreme good, and most worthy of our choice, then God, his honor, and interest, will be the principal

motive and ultimate end of all we do. If we love God supremely, we shall live to him ultimately; if we love him with all our hearts, we shall serve him with all our souls; just as, on the other hand, if we love ourselves above all, then self-love will absolutely govern us in all things; if self-interest be the principal motive, then self-interest will be the last end, in our whole conduct. Thus, then, we see, that if God be highest in esteem, then God's interest will be the principal motive and the last end of the whole conduct of rational creatures; and if self be the highest in esteem, then self-interest will be the principal motive and last end; and hence we may observe, that where self-interest governs men, they are considered in Scripture as serving themselves. (Hos. x. 1. Zech. vii. 5, 6.) And where God's interest governs, they are considered as serving the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 15. Gal. i. 10. Eph. vi. 5, 6, 7, compared with Tit. ii. 9, 10.) To love God so as to serve him, is what the law requires; to love self, so as to serve self, is rebellion against the majesty of heaven. And the same infinite obligations which we are under to love God above ourselves, even the same infinite obligations are we under to live to God ultimately, and not to ourselves. And therefore it is as great a sin to live to ourselves ultimately, as it is to love ourselves supremely.

4. And lastly, *delight* in God is also implied in love to him. By delight we commonly mean that pleasure, sweetness, and satisfaction, which we take in any thing that is very dear to us. When a man appears very excellent to us, and we esteem him, and wish him all good, we also, at the same time, feel a delight in him, and a sweetness in his company and conversation; we long to see him when absent; we rejoice in his presence; the enjoyment of him tends to make us happy: so, when a holy soul beholds God in the infinite moral excellency and beauty of his nature, and loves him supremely, and is devoted to him entirely, now also he delights in him superlatively. His delight and complacency is as great as his esteem, and arises from a sense of the same moral excellency and beauty. From this delight in God arise longings after a further acquaintance with him and greater nearness to him. "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!" Longings after communion with him. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. My soul followeth hard after thee." A holy rejoicing in God. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall

fail, and the field shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Finally, from this delight in God arises a holy disposition to renounce all other things, and live wholly upon him, and take up everlasting content in him, and in him alone. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." The vain man takes content in vain company; the worldly man takes content in riches; the ambitious man in honor and applause; the philosopher in philosophical speculations; the legal hypocrite in his round of duties; the evangelical hypocrite in his experiences, his discoveries, his joys, his raptures, and confident expectation of heaven; but the true lover of God takes his content in God himself. (Psalm iv. 6, 7.) And thus we see what is implied in love to God.

And now, that this is a right representation of the nature of that love which is required in the first and great commandment of the law, upon which chiefly all the law and the prophets hang, is manifest, not only from the reason of the thing, and from what has been already said, but also from this, that such a love to God as this lays a sure and firm foundation for all holy obedience. That love to God is of the right kind, which will effectually influence us to keep his commands. (John xv. 14. 1 John ii. 3, 4, 5.) But it is evident, from the nature of things, that such a love as this will effectually influence us to do so. As self-love naturally causes us to set up self and seek self-interest, so this love to God will naturally influence us to set up God and seek his interest. As delight in the world naturally makes us seek after the enjoyment of the world, so this delight in God will naturally influence us to seek after the enjoyment of God; and while we love God primarily for being what he is, we cannot but, for the same reason, love his law, which is a transcript of his nature, and love to conform to it. If we loved him only from self-love, from the fear of hell, or from the hopes of heaven, we might, at the same time, hate his law; but if we love him for being what he is, we cannot but love to be like him, which is what his law requires. To suppose that a man loves God supremely for what he is, and yet does not love to be like him, is an evident contradiction. It is to suppose a thing supremely loved, and yet, at the same time, not loved at all; so that, to a demonstration, this is the very kind of love which the Lord our God requires of us. So saints in heaven love God perfectly, and so the good man on earth begins, in a

weak and feeble manner, to love God; for there is but one kind of love required in the law, and so but one kind of love which is of the right sort; for no kind of love can be of the right sort, but that very kind of love which the law requires. There is, therefore, no difference between their love in heaven and ours here upon earth, but only in degree.

SECTION II.

SHOWING FROM WHAT MOTIVES TRUE LOVE TO GOD TAKES ITS RISE.

I NOW proceed to show more particularly from what motives we are required thus to love God. Indeed, I have done this in part already; for I have been obliged all along, in showing what is implied in love to God, to keep my eye upon the first and chief ground and reason of love, namely, what God is in himself. But there are other considerations which increase our obligations to love him and live to him, which ought, therefore, to come into the account. And I design here to take a general view of all the reasons and motives which ought to influence us to love the Lord our God; all which are implied in those words, "The Lord thy God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," that is, because he is the Lord and our God.

The first and chief motive which is to influence us to love God with all our hearts, is his infinite dignity and greatness, glory and excellency; or, in one word, *his infinite amiableness.* We are to love him with all our hearts, because he is the Lord; because he is what he is, and just such a being as he is. On this account, primarily, and antecedent to all other considerations, he is infinitely amiable; and, therefore, on this account, primarily, and antecedent to all other considerations, ought he to appear infinitely amiable in our eyes. This is the first and chief reason and ground upon which his law is founded, — I am the Lord. (Exod. xx. 2. Lev. xix.) This, therefore, ought to be the first and chief motive to influence us to obey. The principal reason which moves him to require us to love him, ought to be the principal motive of our love. If the fundamental reason of his requiring us to love him with all our hearts, is because he is what he is, and yet the bottom of our love be something else, then our love is not what his law

requires, but a thing of quite another nature. Yea, if the foundation of our love to God is not because he is what he is, in truth, we love him not at all. If I feel a sort of respect to one of my neighbors, who is very kind to me, and either do not know what sort of man he is, or, if I do, yet do not like him, it is plain it is his kindness I love, and not his person; and all my seeming love to him is nothing but self-love in another shape; and let him cease being kind to me, and my love will cease; let him cross me, and I shall hate him. "Put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face," said the devil concerning Job; and, indeed, Job would have done so, had not his love to God taken its rise from another motive than God's kindnesses to him. But why need I multiply words? For it seems even self-evident that God's loveliness ought to be the first and chief thing for which we love him.

Now, God is infinitely lovely, because he is what he is; or, in other words, his infinite dignity and greatness, glory and excellency, are the result of his natural and moral perfections. So that it is a clear sight and realizing sense of his natural and moral perfections, as they are revealed in his works and in his word, that make him appear, to a holy soul, as a Being of infinite dignity and greatness, glory and excellency. Thus the queen of Sheba, seeing and conversing with Solomon, and viewing his works, under a sense of the large and noble endowments of his mind, was even ravished; and cried out, "The one half was not told me!" And thus the holy and divinely enlightened soul, upon seeing God, reading his word, and meditating on his wonderful works, under a sense of his divine and incomprehensible perfections, is ravished with his infinite dignity, majesty, greatness, glory, and excellency; and loves, admires, and adores; and says, "Who is a God like unto thee?"

His natural perfections are,

1. His infinite understanding, — whereby he knows himself, and all things possible, and beholds all things past, present, and to come, at one all-comprehensive view. So that from everlasting to everlasting, his knowledge can neither increase nor diminish, nor his views of things suffer the least variation; being always absolutely complete, and consequently necessarily always the same.

2. His almighty power, — whereby he is able, with infinite ease, to do any thing that he pleases.

And his moral perfections are,

1. His infinite wisdom, — whereby he is able, and is inclined,

to contrive and order all things, in all worlds, for the best ends, and after the best manner.

2. His perfect holiness, — whereby he is inclined infinitely to love right and hate wrong; or, according to Scripture phrase, to love righteousness and hate iniquity.

3. His impartial justice, — whereby he is unchangeably inclined to render to every one according to his deserts.

4. His infinite goodness, — whereby he can find in his heart to bestow the greatest favors upon his creatures, if he pleases and is inclined to bestow all that is best, all things considered.

5. His truth and faithfulness, — whereby he is inclined to fulfil all his will, according to his word; so that there is an everlasting harmony between his will, his word, and his performance.

And his being, and all his natural and moral perfections, and his glory and blessedness, which result from them, he has in himself and of himself, underived; and is necessarily infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in all; and so, absolutely independent, self-sufficient, and all-sufficient.

"This is the God whom we do love;
This is the God whom we adore;
In him we trust; to him we live;
He is our all for evermore."

Now, there are three ways by which the perfections of God are discovered to the children of men — by his works, by his word, and by his spirit. By the two first, we see him to be what he is; by the last, we behold his infinite glory in being such. The two first produce a speculative knowledge; the last, a sense of moral beauty.

First. These perfections of God are discovered *by his works;* that is, by his creating, preserving, and governing the world; and by his redeeming, sanctifying, and saving his people.

1. By his creating the world. He it is who has stretched abroad the heavens as a curtain, and spread them out as a tent to dwell in; who has created the sun, moon, and stars, and appointed them their courses; who has hung the earth upon nothing; who has fixed the mountains, and bounded the seas, and formed every living creature. All the heavenly hosts he hath made, and created all the nations that dwell upon the earth; and the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field, and the fishes of the sea, and every creeping thing, are the works of his hands; and the meanest of his works are full of unsearchable wonders, far surpassing our understanding. So that "the invisible things of God, from the creation of

the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

2. By his preserving the world. His eyes run to and fro throughout all the world, beholding every thing. His eyes are upon all his works; so that even the sparrows are not forgotten by him, and the very hairs of our head are all numbered. And he holds all things in being; and the opening of his hand fills the desires of every living creature; even the whole family of heaven and earth live upon his goodness, and are maintained by his bounty. In a word, his infinite understanding sees all; his infinite power upholds all; his infinite wisdom takes care of all; and his infinite goodness provides for all; and that every moment; so that the invisible things of God are discovered in preserving as well as in creating the world. And hence, when the pious Psalmist meditates on the works of creation and preservation, he sees God in them, and views his perfections, and is touched at heart with a sense of his glory; and is filled with high and exalted, and with admiring and adoring, thoughts of God. "The heavens declare the glory of the Lord." "O, come, let us sing unto the Lord." But why? "For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods." But how does this appear? Why, "In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land." "O, therefore, come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." And again, "O, sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth." But why? "For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods." But wherein does this appear? Why, "All the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the heavens." And once more: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." But why? "Thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty." But how does this appear? Why, "Thou hast stretched out the heavens as a curtain." And, "And laid the foundations of the earth, that it cannot be removed forever." And, "All wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good." And throughout the whole Psalm he is meditating on the creation and preservation of the world, and viewing the divine perfections therein discovered, and admiring the divine glory, and wondering and adoring; and finally concludes with, "Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord." But,

3. His perfections are still much more eminently displayed

in that moral government, which he maintains over the intelligent part of the creation; especially his moral perfections. In the works of nature his natural perfections are to be seen; but in his moral government of the world, he acts out his heart and shows the temper of his mind. Indeed, all the perfections of God are to be seen in the work of creation, if we view angels and men, and consider what they were, as they came first out of his hands, holy and pure. But still God's conduct towards them, under the character of their King and Governor, more evidently discovers the very temper of his heart. As the tree is known by the fruit, so God's moral perfections may be known by his moral government of the world. The whole world was created for a stage, on which a variety of scenes were to be opened; in and by all which, God designed to exhibit a most exact image of himself. For, as God loves himself infinitely for being what he is, so he takes infinite delight in acting forth and expressing all his heart. He loves to see his nature and image shine in all his works, and to behold the whole world filled with his glory; and he perfectly loves to have his conduct, the whole of it taken together, an exact resemblance of himself; and infinitely abhors, in his public conduct, in the least to counteract the temper of his heart; so as, by his public conduct, to seem to be what indeed he is not. So that in his moral government of the world, we may see his inward disposition, and discern the true nature of his moral perfections. And indeed all his perfections are herein discovered; particularly, —

(1.) His infinite understanding. High on his throne in heaven he sits, and all his vast dominions lie open to his view. His all-seeing eye views all his courts above, and sees under the whole heavens, looks through the earth, and pierces all the dark caverns of hell; so that his acquaintance with all worlds and all things is absolutely perfect and complete. He can behold all the solemn worship of heaven, and the inmost thoughts of all that great assembly; he can behold all the sin, misery, and confusion that overspread the whole earth, and the inmost temper of every mortal; and look through hell, and see all the rebellion, and blasphemy, and cunning devices of those infernal fiends; and all this at one all-comprehending view. And thus, as high Governor of the whole world, he continually beholds all things; whereby a foundation is laid for the exercise of all his other perfections in his government over all. (See the omniscience of God elegantly described in Psalm cxxxix. 1—12.) And being perfectly acquainted with himself, as well as with all his creatures, he

cannot but see what conduct from him towards them, will, all things considered, be most right, and fit, and amiable, and most becoming such a one as he is; and also what conduct from them to him is his due, and their duty. By his infinite understanding, he is perfectly acquainted with right and wrong — with what is fit and what unfit. And, by the moral rectitude of his nature, he infinitely loves the one and hates the other, and is disposed to conduct accordingly; — of which more presently. "Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely." But why? "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite." But wherein does that appear? Why, "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." Now, if the infinite understanding of God may be seen in this one particular, much more is it in the regular ordering and disposing of all things, throughout the whole universe; and that, not only in the natural, but also in the moral world.

(2.) His infinite power is displayed in the government of the world. For he does according to his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; so that none can stay his hand, or hinder the execution of his designs. Have rebellions broken out in any part of his dominions? he has manifestly had the rebels entirely in his hands. They have lain absolutely at his mercy; and he has dealt with them according to his sovereign pleasure; and none has been able to make any resistance; nor has there been any to deliver them out of his hands. When rebellion broke out in heaven, he crushed the rebels in a moment. They fell beneath the weight of his hand; they felt his power; they despaired; they sunk to hell; and there he reserves them in chains; nor can they stir from their dark abode, but by his special permission. And when rebellion broke out upon earth, the rebels were equally in his hands, and at his mercy, unable to make any resistance; although he was pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to take another method with them. But he has since discovered his power, in treading down his implacable enemies under foot, many a time. He destroyed the old world, burned Sodom, drowned Pharaoh and his hosts, and turned Nebuchadnezzar into a beast. If his enemies have exalted themselves, yet he has been above them — brought them down; and discovered to all the world that they are in his hands, and without strength, at his disposal. Or if he has suffered them to go on and prosper, and exalt themselves greatly, yet still he has been above them, and has accomplished

his designs by them, and at last has brought them down. Haughty Nebuchadnezzar, when he had broken the nations to pieces, as if he had been the hammer of the whole earth, now thought himself somebody; and Alexander the Great, when conquering the world, aspired to be thought the son of Jupiter. But the most high God, the great and almighty Governor of the world, always had such scourges of mankind only as a rod in his hand, with which he has executed judgment upon a wicked world. "Howbeit, they meant not so, neither did their hearts think so." But it was in their hearts to gratify their ambition, avarice, and revenge. However, he was above them; and always such have been in his hands as "the axe is in the hands of him that heweth therewith;" or as "the saw is in the hands of him that shaketh it;" or as "the rod is in the hand of him that lifteth it up." And when he has done with the rod, he always breaks it and burns it. (Isa. x. 5—19.)

And as this great King has discovered his almighty power, by crushing rebellions in his kingdom, and subduing rebels, so he has, also, in protecting his friends, and working deliverance for his people. He made a path for his people through the sea; he led them through the wilderness. He gave them water to drink out of the rock; and fed them with angels' food. In the daytime he led them by a cloud, and all the night with the light of fire. He brought them to the promised land, and drove out the heathen before them; and in all their distresses, whenever they cried unto him, he delivered them. And as the supreme Governor of the world, in the days of old, did thus discover his almighty power in governing among his intelligent creatures, so he is still in various ways and manners, in his providential dispensations, evidently discovering that he can do all things. And his people see it and believe it, and admire and adore. (Psalm cv.)

(3.) Again, his infinite wisdom is discovered in an endless variety of instances; in all his government throughout all his dominions; in his managing all things to the glory of his majesty, to the good of his loyal subjects, and to the confusion of his foes. There has never any thing happened in all his dominions, and never will, but has been, and shall be made, entirely subservient to his honor and glory. Even the contempt cast upon him by his rebellious subjects, he turns to his greater glory; as in the case of Pharaoh, who set up himself against God, and said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him? I know not the Lord, nor will I let Israel go." And he exalted himself, and dealt proudly and haughtily;

and hardened his heart, and was resolved he would not regard God, nor be bowed nor conquered by him; for he despised him in his heart. But the more he carried himself as if there were no God, the more were the being and perfections of God made manifest; for the more he hardened his heart, the more stout and stubborn he was, the more God honored himself in subduing him. Yea, God, in his infinite wisdom, suffered him to be as high and haughty, as stout and stubborn, as he pleased; he took off all restraints from him; permitted the magicians to imitate the miracles of Moses, so that Pharaoh, in seeing, might not see, nor be convinced; and he ordered that the plagues should last but for a short season, that Pharaoh might have respite; and thus it was that God hardened his heart. And God, in his infinite wisdom, did all this with a view to his own glory; as he tells Pharaoh by the mouth of Moses — "Such and such plagues I design to bring upon you, and to do so and so with you." "And, indeed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." And, accordingly, God was illustriously honored, at last, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, at the Red Sea; and the Egyptians, and all the neighboring nations, were made to know that he was the Lord; and his name became dreadful among the heathen. And we find that, in three or four hundred years after, the Philistines had not forgotten it; for when the ark, in the days of Eli, was carried into the camp of Israel, the Philistines were sore afraid, and said, "God is come into the camp: woe unto us; who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness."

So God wisely ordered and overruled all things that befell the children of Israel in the wilderness, to accomplish the ends he had in view. His designs were to get himself a great name, and fill the whole earth with his glory, (Num. xiv. 21,) and to try and humble his people, and make them know, that it was not for their righteousness that he brought them into the land of Canaan. (Deut. ix.) And every thing that came to pass, for those forty years, was admirably calculated to attain these ends. The news of Pharaoh's overthrow; of God's coming down upon Mount Sinai, in the presence of all Israel, and abiding there so long a time with such awful majesty; and of the pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night; of the manna; of the water flowing out of a rock, and following them; of their murmurings and insurrections, and God's judgments upon them; I say, the news of these, and other things of this nature, that

happened to them for those forty years, flew all the world over, and filled all the nations of the earth with the greatest astonishment; and made them think there was no God like the God of Israel. (Num. xiv. 13, 14, 15.) By all these things, and by God's bringing his people, at last, to the possession of the land of Canaan, according to his promise, there was exhibited a specimen of God's infinite knowledge, power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; and that before the eyes of all the nations. And so the whole earth was filled with his glory; that is, with the clear manifestations of those perfections in which his glory consists. And thus his great end was obtained. And, in the mean time, all the wanderings, and trials, and sins, and sorrows of the children of Israel, together with all the wonderful works which their eyes beheld, and wherein God discovered himself for those forty years, had a natural tendency to try them, to humble them, and break their hearts, and make them know, that, not for their righteousness, nor for the uprightness of their hearts, did God at last show them that great mercy; and to convince them of the exceeding great obligations they were under to love, and fear, and serve the Lord forever. And so, the other great end which God had in view was accomplished. (Deut. viii. ix. x.) And now, all these things were by God wisely done; and in this his conduct, his infinite wisdom is to be seen.* And thus it is in all God's dispensations, throughout all his dominions, with regard to the whole universe in general, and to every intelligent creature in particular. His works are all done in wisdom; and so his infinite wisdom is discovered in all; and hence God appears infinitely glorious in the eyes of his people. (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4. Psalm civ. 24; cv. 1, 45. 1 Cor. i. 24, 31.)

(4.) Again, his infinite purity and holiness is also discovered in his government of the world; in all that he has done to establish right, and discountenance wrong, throughout all his dominions. His creating angels and men in his own image,

* If God had so ordered that Abraham had been born in the land of Canaan, and his posterity had multiplied greatly, and the other nations gradually, by sicknesses and wars, had wasted away and come to nothing, until there were none but the posterity of Abraham left, and they had filled the land, God's hand then would not have been seen; none of these excellent ends attained; all would have been resolved into natural causes. Therefore God contrived where Abraham should be born; how he should leave his own country; have a promise of the land of Canaan; and how his seed should come to be in Egypt; come to be in great bondage and distress; how he would send, and how he would deliver them, and how they should carry themselves, and what should happen; and how every thing should turn out at last. He laid the whole plan with a view to those excellent ends his eye was upon. It was wisely contrived, and, when it came to be acted over, his infinite wisdom was discovered.

with his law written on their hearts, manifested his disposition, and showed what he was pleased with. But his public conduct, as moral Governor of the world, has more evidently discovered the very temper of his heart, and shown how he loves right and hates wrong, to an infinite degree. Governors, among men, discover much of their disposition, and show what they love and what they hate, by their laws; and they show how fervent their love and hatred is, by all the methods they take to enforce them; and so does the great Governor of the world. By his laws, by his promises and threatenings, by his past conduct, and declared designs for the future, he manifests how he loves moral good and hates moral evil.

By his infinite understanding, he is perfectly acquainted with himself, and with all his intelligent creatures; and so perfectly knows what conduct in him towards them is right, fit, and amiable, and such as becomes such a one as he is; and also perfectly knows what conduct in his creatures towards him, and towards each other, is fit and amiable, and so their duty. He sees what is right, and infinitely loves it, because it is right. He sees what is wrong, and infinitely hates it, because it is wrong; and, in his whole conduct, as Governor of the world, he appears to be just what he is at heart — an infinite friend to right, and an infinite enemy to wrong.

He takes state; sets up himself as a God; bids all the world adore him, love, and obey him, with all their hearts; and that upon pain of eternal damnation, in case of the least defect; and promises eternal life and glory, in case of perfect obedience. This is the language of his law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. Do this, and live; disobey, and die." And now all that infinite esteem for himself, and infinite regard for his own honor, which he herein manifests, does not result from a proud or a selfish spirit; for there is no such thing in his nature: nor does he threaten damnation for sin, because it hurts him; or promise eternal life to obedience, because it does him any good; for he is infinitely above us, and absolutely independent of us, and cannot receive advantage or disadvantage from us. (Job xxii. 2, 3.; xxxv. 6, 7.) But it results from the infinite holiness of his nature. He loves and honors himself as he does, because since he is what he is, it is right and fit he should. He bids the world adore, love, and obey him with all their hearts, because, considering what he is, and what they are, it is infinitely fit and right. He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves, because this also, in the nature of things, is right. And while he promises eternal life to the obedient, and threatens eternal damnation to the disobedient,

he shows how infinitely he loves righteousness and hates iniquity. His promising eternal life and glory to perfect obedience, does indeed manifest the infinite goodness and bountifulness of his nature; but then his promising all, under the notion of a reward, discovers this temper of his heart — his infinite love to right.

As to all his positive injunctions, they are evidently designed to promote a conformity to the moral law. And as to the moral law, it is originally founded upon the very reason and nature of things. The duties required therein are required originally, because they are right in themselves. And the sins forbidden are forbidden originally, because they are unfit and wrong in themselves. The intrinsic fitness of the things required, and the intrinsic unfitness of the things forbidden, was the original ground, reason, and foundation of his law. Thus he bids all the world love him with all their hearts, because he is the Lord their God; and love one another as brethren, because they are all children of the same common father, having the same nature. He requires this supreme love to himself, and this mutual love among his subjects, because it is right that so it should be, and because he perfectly loves that the thing that is right should be done; and not from any advantage that can possibly accrue unto him from the behavior of his creatures. And he forbids the contrary, because it is wrong, and therefore infinitely hateful in his sight; and not because it could be any disadvantage to him. All the glory and blessedness which he bestows upon the angels in heaven, under the notion of a reward to their obedience, is not because their obedience does him any good, for it does not; nor because they deserve any thing from his hands, for they do not; (Rom. xi. 35, 36;) but merely because it is right that they should in all things obey him. This is what he loves, and what he delights to honor. And all the infinite, eternal glories of heaven can but just serve as a sufficient testimony of his approbation. So, on the other hand, it was not in a passion, or from sudden, rash revenge, which many times influences sinful men to cruel and barbarous deeds, that he turned those that sinned down to hell; and, for their first offence, doomed them to everlasting woe, without the least hope; for there is no such thing in his nature. As he is not capable of being injured, as we are, so neither is he capable of such anger as we feel. No; the thing they did was in itself infinitely wrong, and that was the true and only cause of his infinite displeasure; which infinite displeasure he meant to declare and make known in the sight of all worlds, throughout the endless ages of eternity, by rendering to them according to

their deserts; for he loves to appear as great an enemy to sin in his conduct, as he is in his heart. He loves to act out his heart, and exhibit a true image of himself. His infinite love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity, is also displayed in his promising eternal life and blessedness to Adam and to all his race, a whole world of beings, as a reward to the obedience of Adam — by him constituted public head and representative, on the one hand; and threatening eternal destruction to him and all his race, a whole world of beings, in case of the least transgression, on the other hand. But his infinite love to righteousness, and hatred of iniquity, is manifested in the greatest perfection in the death of Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son. But of this more afterwards. In a word, all the blessings which he has granted to the godly in this world as rewards of their virtue; to Abel, Enoch, and Noah, to Lot, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the judgments which he has executed upon the wicked; his turning Adam out of paradise; drowning the old world; burning Sodom; together with all the evils which befell the children of Israel in the wilderness; in the time of the judges; in the reigns of their kings; and their long captivity in Babylon, have all been public testimonies that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. And, in heaven and in hell, he designs to display, to all eternity, in the most glorious and dreadful manner, how infinitely he loves righteousness and hates iniquity.

Now, when true believers, who are divinely enlightened, meditate on and view the laws, the conduct, and the declared designs of the great Governor of the world, they love, admire, and adore, and say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the whole world is full of thy glory." This divine disposition to love righteousness and hate iniquity, which the great Governor of the world thus discovers in all his government, appears infinitely beautiful and glorious, excellent and amiable in their eyes; whence they are ready to say, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness?" etc., as they do in Exod. xv. 11.*

* If we should suppose, (as some do,) that there is nothing right or wrong antecedent to a consideration of the positive will and law of God, the great Governor of the world, and that right and wrong result, originally, from his sovereign will and absolute authority entirely, then these absurdities would unavoidably follow: —

1. That the moral perfections of God are empty names, without any signification at all. For if there be no intrinsic moral fitness and unfitness in things, no right nor wrong, then there is no such thing as moral beauty or moral deformity; and so, no foundation, in the nature of things, for any moral propensity; that is, there is nothing for God to love or hate, considered as a moral agent. There

(5.) His impartial justice is also discovered in his moral government of the world. He appears, in his public conduct, as one infinitely engaged to give every one his due, and as one absolutely governed by a spirit of the most perfectly disinterested impartiality. He appears as one infinitely engaged to maintain the rights of the Godhead, and to secure that glory to the divine Being that is his proper due; and that by the law which he has established, in heaven and on earth, binding all to love, worship, and obey him, as God, upon pain of eternal damnation. And so, again, he appears as one infinitely engaged to secure all his subjects here upon earth in a quiet and peaceable possession of their own proper rights; and that by strictly enjoining every one to love his neighbor as himself, and always do as he would be done by, and that upon pain of eternal damnation. (Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxvii. 26.) And he appears as one governed by a spirit of the most perfectly disinterested

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can be no inclination or disposition in him to love right and hate wrong, if there be no such thing as right or wrong. So that the only idea we could frame of God, would be that of an almighty despotic sovereign, who makes his own will his only rule, without any regard to right or wrong, good or evil, just or unjust — an idea of the infinitely glorious and ever-blessed God evidently as contrary to truth as can be devised.

2. That, in the nature of things, there is no more reason to love and obey God than there is to hate and disobey him — there being, in the nature of things, no right nor wrong. Just as if God was not infinitely worthy of our highest esteem and most perfect obedience! and just as if, in the nature of things, there was no reason why we should love and obey him, but merely because he is the greatest and strongest, and says we must! — than which nothing can be more evidently absurd. But if these things are so, then it will follow, —

3. That there is no reason why he should require his creatures to love and obey him, or forbid the contrary; or why he should reward the one, or punish the other — there being, in the nature of things, no right nor wrong; and so the foundation of God's law and government is overturned, and all religion torn up by the roots; and nothing is left but arbitrary tyranny and servile subjection; all expressly contrary to Gen. xviii. 25. Heb. i. 9. Eph. vi. 1. Rom. xii. 1. Rev. iv. 11. Rom. vii. 12. Rom. ii. 4, 5, 6. Rev. xix. 1, 6. Ezek. xviii. 25.

Or again, if we should suppose, as others do, that there is nothing right or wrong antecedent to a consideration of the general good of the whole system of intelligent created beings; and that right and wrong result originally and entirely from the natural tendency of things to promote or hinder the general good of the whole; then, also, these manifest absurdities will unavoidably follow: —

1. That the moral perfections of God entirely consist in, or result from, a disposition to love his creatures supremely, and seek their happiness as his only end. Just as if it became the Most High to make a God of his creatures, and himself their servant! — expressly contrary to Rom. xi. 36. Num. xiv. Rev. iv. 11.

2. That God loves virtue and rewards it, merely because it tends to make his creatures happy; and hates vice and punishes it, merely because it tends to make his creatures miserable. Just as if he had no regard to the rights of the Godhead, nor cared how much contempt was cast upon the glorious majesty of Heaven! — expressly contrary to Exod. xxxii. Num. xiv. 1 Sam. ii. 29, 30. 2 Sam. xii. 10, 14. Psalm li. 4.

3. That he requires us to love and obey him merely because it tends to make

impartiality, in that he spared not the angels that sinned, who were some of the noblest of all his creatures; and in that he is determined not to spare impenitent sinners at the day of judgment, though they cry ever so earnestly for mercy; but, above all, in that he spared not his only-begotten Son, when he stood in the room of sinners. If ever any poor, guilty wretch, round the world, feels tempted to think that God is cruel for damning sinners, and does not do as he would be done by, if he was in their case, and they in his, let him come away to the cross of Christ, and see God's own Son, his second self, there nailed up, naked, bleeding, groaning, dying, in the greatest possible contempt, ignominy, and shame, before ten thousand insulting, bloodthirsty spectators. And let him know that this Jesus is God — a person of infinitely greater dignity and worth than all creatures in heaven and earth put together, and infinitely dearer to the great Governor of the world, even just as dear as his own

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us happy, and forbids the contrary merely because it tends to make us miserable. Just as if he had no sense of the infinite glory and excellency of his nature, and our infinite obligations to love and obey him thence arising! and just as if he thought it no crime in us to treat him with the greatest contempt! and just as if nothing could raise his resentment but merely the injury done to ourselves! — expressly contrary to Num. xiv. 2 Sam. xii. 10, 14.

4. That we are under no obligations to love God, but merely because it tends to make us happy; and that it is no crime to hate and blaspheme God, but merely because it tends to make us miserable. But if so, then the misery which naturally results from hating and blaspheming God is exactly equal to the crime; and therefore no positive inflicted punishment is deserved in this world, or in that which is to come. And, therefore, all the punishments which God inflicts upon sinners in this world, and forever in hell, are entirely undeserved; and so his law and government, instead of being holy, just, and good, are infinitely unreasonable, tyrannical, and cruel. To say that God punishes some of his sinful creatures merely to keep others in awe, when, as they do not, in the least, deserve any punishment, is to suppose the great Governor of the world to do evil that good may come; and yet, at the same time, to take the most direct course to render himself odious throughout all his dominions. It is impossible to account for the punishments which God has inflicted upon sinners in this world, and designs to inflict upon them forever in hell, without supposing that there is an infinite evil in sin, over and above what results from its natural tendency to make us miserable; and that, therefore, we are under infinite obligations to love and obey God, antecedent to any consideration of its tendency to make us happy.

From all which, it is evident, to demonstration, that right and wrong do neither result from the mere will and law of God, nor from any tendency of things to promote or hinder the happiness of God's creatures. It remains, therefore, that there is an intrinsic moral fitness and unfitness, absolutely, in things themselves; as that we should love the infinitely glorious God, is, in the nature of things, infinitely fit and right; and to hate and blaspheme him, is, in the nature of things, infinitely unfit and wrong; and that, antecedent to any consideration of advantage or disadvantage, reward or punishment, or even of the will or law of God. And hence it is that God infinitely loves right and hates wrong, and appears so infinitely engaged to reward the one and punish the other. And hence his law and government are holy, just, and good: they are glorious; and in and by them the infinite glory of the divine nature shines forth. (Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. Rev. xix. 1—6.)

self, and upon whom he would not lay these sufferings any sooner than upon himself;—I say, let him stand, and look, and gaze, and learn that God does exactly as he would be done by, when he damns sinners to all eternity, were he in their case, and they in his,—if I may so say, when speaking of the most high God,—since that for his own Son, a person of infinite dignity, to suffer all these things, is equivalent to the eternal torments of finite creatures. Indeed, it was not because he was not a being of infinite goodness, that he treated his own Son so; nor is it because he has no regard to his creatures' happiness, that he designs to damn the finally impenitent; but it is merely because sin is an infinite evil, and, according to strict justice, worthy of an infinite punishment. It is right and fit that he should do as he does, and therefore his conduct will forever appear infinitely glorious and beautiful in the eyes of all holy beings. "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the fields be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth. (See also Rev. xix. 1—6.)

(6.) His infinite goodness is also discovered in his government of the world. For all the laws of this great and good Governor are suited in their own nature to advance all his subjects to the highest perfection they are capable of. His law teaches us to view all things just as they are, and to have our will and affections entirely governed by the truth; by the very reason and nature of things; and so to be according to the measure of such finite creatures, in our wills, and in the temper of our minds, after the image of the blessed and glorious God, which is the highest dignity and perfection we are possibly capable of. When God commands us to be holy as he is holy, he enjoins that as our duty, which at the same time is our highest possible privilege. He bids us be like the angels, and begin our heaven upon earth; yea, even to participate of a glory and blessedness of the same nature with that which he himself enjoys; to behold his glory; to be ravished with his beauty; to esteem him supremely, live to him entirely, and delight in him superlatively, and to become like him in our views of things, and in the temper of our minds, is our highest dignity, glory, and excellency, and our highest blessedness. And, besides, his laws are still further calculated to promote the welfare of his subjects, in that they are suited to establish universal love, peace, and harmony, throughout all his dominions. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom; and were his

authority duly regarded, and his laws obeyed, love, and peace, and harmony, with all their happy and blessed effects, would reign through all the earth, as they do in heaven; and paradise would not be confined to Eden, nor to heaven, but be all over the world.

And the wrath of this good Governor is only revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, which are the ruin and debasement of our nature, and the destruction of our peace and happiness. He threatens damnation to his subjects, to keep them from destroying themselves, as well as to deter them from affronting his majesty. All the dreadful threatenings of his law, result not only from his holiness and justice, but also from the infinite goodness of his nature; in that hereby his subjects are mercifully forewarned of the evil and bitter consequences of sin, to the end they may avoid it. He is a perfect enemy to hatred and revenge, to cruelty and injustice; he cannot bear to see the widow or fatherless oppressed, or the poor despised, or the miserable insulted, or any evil thing done among his subjects; and therefore this good Governor has threatened tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath, against every soul that doth evil; and, with all his authority, has commanded his subjects, through all this world, upon pain of eternal damnation, to do as they would be done by.

And then, still further to engage his subjects to that in which their greatest glory and blessedness consists, he, in his law, promises eternal life to the obedient; wherein the infinite bountifulness of his nature, as well as his unspeakable concern for his creatures' welfare, is discovered.

And if we survey his conduct towards mankind from the beginning, we may, in ten thousand instances, see the infinite goodness of his nature displayed. If we consider what his ways have been towards an apostate world; how he has given his Son to be a Redeemer, and his Spirit to be a Sanctifier; how he has sent all his servants, the prophets, rising early and sending them; and that notwithstanding he knew beforehand what treatment he would meet with from a guilty, ungrateful, God-hating world; how they would murder his Son, resist his Spirit, and kill his messengers; — if we consider how patient, and forbearing, and long-suffering he has been towards obstinate sinners; how loath to give them over; swearing by himself that he delights not in their death, but rather that they turn and live; even while they have contemned and affronted him in the vilest manner; — and if we consider his distinguished favors towards his elect, and the marvellous things which he has wrought for his church and people; — I

say, if we consider these things, and, at the same time, look round the world and behold the innumerable common favors strewed abroad among guilty, hell-deserving rebels, we must be forced to own, that he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works.

His goodness, indeed, is evidently as unbounded as his power. There is no act of kindness, which his omnipotency is able to do, but that there is goodness enough in his heart to prompt him to do it, if, all things considered, it is best to be done. His propensity to do good is fully equal to his ability. All the treasures and good things of this lower world are his, and he gives all to the children of men; and we should have enjoyed all, without the least sorrow intermixed, had not our sin and apostasy made it necessary for him to give some testimony of his displeasure; and yet even the calamities of life are well adapted, in our present state, to do us good. All the treasures and glories of heaven are his, and he offers all to a guilty world, and actually gives all to such as are willing to accept of all, through the Mediator, in the way prescribed; and what can he give more? Can he give his only-begotten Son to die for sinners? Behold, he has a heart to do it! Can he give his Holy Spirit to recover poor sinners to God? Behold, he has a heart to do it! — is as ready to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask, as parents are to give bread to their children! And, finally, can he, in any sense, give himself to his creatures? Behold, he is willing to do so; to be their God, and father, and portion, and be all things to them, and do all things for them, if they will but accept of him through Jesus Christ! So that, as I said, his propensity to do good is fully equal to his ability; and there is no doubt but that he does show all those kindnesses to his intelligent creatures, which, all things considered, are best should be shown. And his understanding is infinite, whereby he is able to determine exactly what is best in the whole. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

And such is the goodness of his nature, and so much goodness has he in his heart, that he needs no motive to excite him to do good; that is, nothing from without. Thus unmoved and unexcited by any thing from without. himself, of his own mere goodness, he did, in the days of eternity, determine to do all that good which ever will by him be done, to all eternity, when there was nothing existing but himself, and so

nothing to move him but his own good pleasure. Yea, such is the goodness of his nature, that he not only needs no motive from without to excite him to do good, but even then, when there are all things to the contrary; even every thing in his creatures to render them ill-deserving, and to discourage and hinder his showing mercy, and to provoke him to wrath; even then, when discouragements are infinitely great, and provocations are innumerable; yea, when there is nothing in his creature but what is of the nature of a provocation; even in such a case, he can show mercy; yea, the greatest of mercies. He can give his Son to die for such, and his Holy Spirit to sanctify them, and himself at last to be their God and father, and everlasting portion. Such is the incomparable goodness of his nature. "Who is a God like unto thee!" But then he is at liberty in such cases, and may act according to his own discretion, and have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and have compassion on whom he will have compassion; and truly, it is infinitely fit he should. To act sovereignly, in such cases, is infinitely becoming; and, indeed, and it is fit he should dispense all his favors according to his sovereign pleasure. It is fit he should do what he will with his own. He knows best how to exercise his own goodness, and it is perfectly fit that he should be at liberty, and act according to his own discretion — according to the counsel of his own will. And because it is infinitely fit, therefore he actually does so. (Eph. i. 11.) He passed by the angels that sinned, and pitied sinful men; he passed by the rest of the world, and chose the seed of Abraham; he suffers thousands of sinners to go on in their sins and perish, and, in the mean time, seizes here and there one by his all-conquering grace, and effectually saves them; and all according to his sovereign pleasure, because it seems good in his sight so to do. And the reason why he acts sovereignly, is because, in the nature of things, it is fit he should; therefore his sovereignty is a holy and a glorious sovereignty. Hence, when Moses desired to see his glory, he discovered this unto him. (Exod. xxxiii. 12.) And because our Savior saw how fit and becoming it was for God to act as a sovereign, in bestowing his favors, therefore he saw a glory in his sovereignty, and so rejoiced in it. (Matt. xi. 25, 26.) And sovereign grace is glorious grace in the eyes of every one who views things aright, and has a right frame of heart. Considering that all God has is his own, that he knows infinitely the best what to do with what he has; that there can be no motive from without to excite him to act, it is infinitely fit he should be left to himself, to

act according to his own discretion; and it is infinite imprudence for a worm of the dust to intermeddle or go about to direct the almighty and infinitely wise God; and it is infinite wickedness to dislike his conduct, and find fault with his dispensations.

Indeed, if there was nothing of greater worth and importance than the happiness of his creatures and subjects, and so nothing that he ought to have a greater regard to and concern for, then it is not to be supposed that any of his creatures and subjects will be finally miserable. The infinitely good Governor of the world has a great regard to the happiness of his subjects; their welfare is very dear to him, and their misery, in itself, or for its own sake, very undesirable in his sight; yet he has so much greater regard to something else, that, in some instances, he actually does suffer sinners to go on in their sins, and perish forever; yea, he will inflict the eternal torments of hell upon them. The goodness of God is a holy, wise, and rational goodness, and not an unreasonable fondness; he will never do a wrong thing, to oblige any of his creatures. No, he had rather the whole world should be damned; yea, that even his own Son should die; nor will he ever communicate good to any one, when, all things considered, it is not best and wisest. When he first designed to create the world, and first laid out his whole scheme of government, as it was easy for him to have determined that neither angels nor men should ever sin, and that misery should never be heard of in all his dominions, so he could easily have prevented both sin and misery. Why did he not? Surely, not for want of goodness in his nature, for that is infinite; not from any thing like cruelty, for there is no such thing in him; not for want of a suitable regard to the happiness of his creatures; for that he always has; but it was because, in his infinite wisdom, he did not think it best on the whole. It was not because he had not sufficient power to preserve angels and men all holy and happy, for it is certain he had; it was not because preventing grace would have been inconsistent with their being free agents, for it would not; it was not because he did not thoroughly consider and weigh the thing with all its consequences, for it is certain he did; but, upon the whole, all things considered, he judged it best to permit the angels to sin and man to fall, and so let misery enter into his dominions. It did not come to pass accidentally and unawares, and contrary to what God had ever thought of or intended; because it is certain that he knew all things from the beginning; and it is certain that, in an affair of such a

nature, and of such consequence, he could not stand by as an idle, unconcerned spectator, that cares not which way things go. There is no doubt, therefore, but that, all things considered, he thought it best to permit things to come to pass just as they did; and, if he thought it best, it was best, for his understanding is infinite, his wisdom unerring, and so he can never be mistaken. But why was it best? What could he have in view preferable to the happiness of his creatures? And if their happiness was to him above all things most dear, how could he bear the thoughts of their ever, any of them, being miserable? Why, it is certain he thought it best; and therefore it is certain he had a view to something else besides merely the happiness of his creatures; to something of greater importance, and more worthy to bear a governing sway in his mind, by which it became him to be above all things influenced, in laying out and contriving how things should proceed and be disposed in the world he designed to create.

But what was that thing which was of greater worth and importance, and so more worthy to bear a governing sway in his mind, and to which he had the greatest regard, making all other things give way to this? What was his grand end in creating and governing the world? Why, look; what end he is at last like to obtain, when the whole scheme is finished, and the day of judgment past, and heaven and hell filled with all their proper inhabitants. And what will be the final result? What will he get by all? Why, in all, he will exert and display every one of his perfections to the life, and so, by all, will exhibit a most perfect and exact image of himself. And now, as he is infinitely glorious in being what he is, therefore that scheme of conduct which is perfectly suited to exhibit the most lively and exact image of him, must be infinitely glorious too; and, therefore, this is the greatest and best thing he can aim at in all his works; and this, therefore, ought to be his last end. Now, it is evident that the fall of the angels and of man, together with all those things which have and will come to pass in consequence thereof, and occasioned thereby, from the beginning of the world to the day of judgment, and throughout eternity, will serve to give a much more lively and perfect representation of God, than could possibly have been exhibited, had there never been any sin or misery. The holiness and justice, the goodness, mercy, and grace of God, shine much more brightly. They have been displayed with an astonishing lustre and glory in the death of Christ, and will be displayed forever in heaven and in hell, as they could not have been, had not sin and misery ever

been permitted to enter into God's world. Indeed, if, in the nature of things, it had been wrong for God to have permitted any of his creatures to sin, and then to punish them for it; if God had been bound in duty, or in goodness, to keep them from sin, or to save them when they had sinned, then the case had been otherwise. But since, in the nature of things, it was fit he should be at liberty, and act according to his own discretion, and since the end he had in view was so noble and godlike, his conduct in this affair was infinitely right, fit, and becoming, and so infinitely glorious. Certainly God thought it was so, or he would not have done as he did; and therefore, if we view things as God did, and have a temper and frame of heart like unto his, we shall think so too. And, as I said before, it is horrid pride and imprudence for us to pretend to know better than the infinitely wise God, and infinite wickedness for us to pretend to find fault with his conduct.* (Rom. ix. 19—23.) Thus, if he had aimed merely at the happiness of his creatures, he could easily have so ordered that Pharaoh should willingly have let Israel go, and he could have led Israel in less than forty days to the promised land, and put them into an immediate possession; but there was something else which he had a greater regard to; and therefore Pharaoh's heart is hardened, and all his wonders are wrought in the land of Egypt. The tribes of Israel march to the borders of the Red Sea; the sea parts; Israel goes through, but the Egyptians are drowned. And now Israel is tempted and tried, and they sin and rebel, and so are doomed to wander forty years in the wilderness, and to have their carcasses fall there. And why was all this? Why, because his design was to display all his perfections, and fill the whole earth with his glory. (Exod. ix. 16. Num. xiv. 21.) And now, because it is the most noble thing that God can have in view, to act forth all his perfections to the life, and so exhibit the most exact representation of himself in his works, therefore it is infinitely fit he should make this his last end, and all other things subservient; and his conduct in so doing is infinitely beautiful and glorious. Thus we see how

* *Obj.* But surely it could not be consistent with the divine goodness, from all eternity, to decree the everlasting misery of his creatures.

Ans. God has in fact permitted sin to enter into the world; does in fact permit many to die in their sins; will in fact punish them forever; and all consistent with the infinite goodness of his nature, as every one must acknowledge. And since it is consistent with his goodness to do as he does, it was consistent with his goodness to determine with himself beforehand to do so. What God from eternity decreed to do, that God in time will do; therefore, if all God's conduct be holy, just, and good, so also are all his decrees; unless we can suppose it to be wrong for the infinitely wise God, from all eternity, to determine upon a conduct in all respects right — than which nothing can be more absurd.

the goodness of God is displayed in his government of the world, and see that it is an unbounded, rich, free goodness, and that all the exercises of it are sovereign, and under the direction of his infinite wisdom; so that God is infinitely glorious on the account of this perfection of his nature. (Exod. xxxiii. 19; xxxiv. 5, 6, 7. Rom. ix. Eph. i. 1—2.)

(7.) His unchangeable truth and faithfulness are also discovered in his government of the world; and that in the fulfilment of his promises, and the execution of his threatenings. Did he promise to be Abraham's God? So he was. Did he promise to give the land of Canaan to his seed for an inheritance? So he did. Did he promise to send his Son into the world, and to set him up a kingdom upon earth? Even so he has done. And he is in like manner true and faithful to all his promises which he has made to his people? And did he threaten to drown the old world; to make Israel wander forty years in the wilderness, to deliver them into the hands of their enemies, at what time soever they should forsake him, and go and serve other gods, and finally, to send them captives into Babylon for seventy years? Even so he has done. God's word may always be depended upon; for what he designs, that he says; and what he says, that he will do. And this is another of the glorious perfections of his nature.

Thus all the perfections of God are discovered in his government of the world. By his conduct we may see what he is, and learn the very temper of his heart. And now, I might go through his other works, his redeeming, justifying, sanctifying sinners, and bringing them to eternal glory at last, and show how his glorious perfections shine forth in them. But I have already hinted at some of these things, and shall have occasion afterwards to view the divine perfections shining forth in these works of God, when I come to consider the nature of the gospel. Sufficient has been said to answer my present purpose, and therefore, for brevity's sake, I will proceed no further here. Thus, then, we see how the perfections of God are manifested in his works.

Secondly. The same representation is made of God in his *word*, for these great works of God, his creating, preserving, and governing the world, his redeeming, sanctifying, and saving sinners, are the subject matter of all the Bible. God, in his works, acts out his perfections, and, in his word, lays the whole before our eyes in writing. Therein he has told us what he has done, and what he intends to do; and so has delineated his glorious perfections in the plainest manner. In his word, God has revealed himself to the children of men; has manifested and shown what

he is. But how? Why, by declaring and holding forth his works, as that in which he has exhibited the image of himself. Thus the Scriptures begin with an account of God's creating the world, and go on throughout all the Old Testament, informing how he preserves and governs it; and then, in the New Testament, we are informed more particularly how he redeems, justifies, sanctifies, and saves sinners. And now, as the actions of a man discover the temper and disposition of his heart, and show what he is, so the works of God, from first to last, all taken together, hold forth an exact representation of himself. If we will begin with God's creating the world, and survey all his conduct in the light of Scripture; his conduct towards man before the fall, and after the fall; his conduct towards Abel and Cain, Enoch and Noah, and all the old world; his conduct towards Lot and Sodom, towards Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph; towards the children of Israel, in Egypt, at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, at Sinai, at Masah, at Taberah; and in the times of Joshua, of their Judges, of their Kings; and then come into the New Testament, and survey his conduct with relation to the redemption and salvation of sinners; and then look forward to the great judgment-day, and see his whole scheme finished; see the result, the conclusion, and end of all; look up to heaven and take a view of that world, and look down to hell and survey the state of things there;—from the whole we may see what God is; for in the whole God exerts his nature, and by the whole God designs to exhibit an exact representation of himself. And then are our apprehensions of God right, and according to truth, when we take in that very representation which he has made of himself. And now to account him infinitely glorious in being what he is, and to love him with all our hearts, because he is what he is, is the very thing which the law of God requires.

And, indeed, so plain is that representation which God has made of himself, by his works and in his word, and he is really so infinitely glorious in being what he is, that were not mankind, through their exceeding great depravity, entirely void of a right taste and relish for true beauty, they could not but be even ravished with the divine Being. They would naturally feel as they do in heaven, and naturally speak their language: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" But such is the vile temper of sinful, apostate creatures, that they are not only blind to the moral excellency of the divine nature, but are even in a stated, habitual contrariety to God in the frame of their hearts. (Rom. viii. 7.) And hence the manifestation which God has made of himself can

find no place in their hearts. (John viii. 37.) They cannot attend to things of such a nature, (ver. 43,) because so disagreeable to their taste; for (ver. 47) "He that is of God, heareth God's word; ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God." It is hard to bring unregenerate men so much as to have right notions of what God is, because he is a Being in his nature so contrary and disagreeable to them. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge. Men had rather that God was another kind of Being, different from what he really is, and more like themselves; one that would suit their temper and serve their interest; and therefore they frame such a one in their own fancy, and then fall down and worship the false image which they have set up. From thence it is, that all those false notions of God have taken their rise, which have always filled the world. But were men brought to have right notions of what God is, and to take in that very representation which he has made of himself, by his works and in his word, yet they would be so far from accounting him infinitely glorious in being what he is, that they would see no form or comeliness in him wherefore they should desire him, but would feel the like malignant spirit towards him as the Jews did towards their prophets, and towards Christ and his apostles, only in a worse degree. The same temper which caused the exercise of such enmity towards their prophets, and towards Christ and his apostles, would have caused as great or greater towards God himself, had they but had right notions of him. And the clearer apprehension a sinner has of God, the more will his enmity exert itself, because a sinful nature and a holy nature are diametrically opposite to each other; and therefore the clearest external revelation of God cannot bring sinners to love him. All the world will see just what kind of Being he is at the day of judgment, and that in a very plain and clear manner. But yet they whose nature it is to hate him for being what he is, will hate him still, yea, hate him more than ever; and therefore, besides the external revelation which God has made of himself by his works and in his word, there is an absolute necessity that he should internally reveal himself in his glory to the heart of a sinner, in order to beget divine love there. Which brings me to add,

Thirdly. God reveals his infinite glory in being what he is in the hearts of sinners, by his Holy Spirit. (Matt. xi. 25, 27.) By his works and in his word he has revealed what he is, and that in a manner sufficiently plain; even so plainly, that there is no need at all of any further objective revelation; and he is really infinitely glorious in being what he is. Now, therefore,

if we would rightly attend to that revelation which God has made of himself, we could not but have right apprehensions of him; and if we had a good taste for true beauty, we could not but be ravished with his glory; but we are naturally disinclined to right apprehensions of God, and are entirely destitute of a true taste for moral beauty. And hence we may learn what kind of inward illumination we stand in need of from the spirit of God. We do not need the Holy Spirit to reveal any new truths concerning God, not already revealed; for the external revelation which he has made of himself is sufficiently full. We do not need to have the Holy Spirit immediately reveal all these truths concerning God over again to us, by way of objective revelation, or immediate inspiration; because the external revelation already made is sufficiently plain. We only need, first, to be effectually awakened, to attend to those manifestations which he has made of himself in his works and word, that we may see what he is; and secondly, to have a spiritual taste imparted to us, by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, that we may have a sense of his infinite glory in being such. For these two will lay an effectual foundation in our hearts for that love which the law requires. By the common influences of the Spirit, we may be awakened to a realizing sight and sense of what God is; and by the special and sanctifying influences of the Spirit, we may receive a sense of his infinite glory in being such. And also the sense of his glory will naturally cause us to see more clearly what God is; for a sense of the moral excellency of the divine nature fixes our thoughts on God; and the more our thoughts are fixed, the more distinctly we see what he is. And while we see him to be what he is, and see his infinite glory in being such, hereby a divine love is naturally enkindled in our hearts. And thus "He that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in our hearts, and gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." And so, "We all, with open face, behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image." A sight of the moral excellency of the divine nature makes God appear infinitely glorious in every respect. Those things in God, which before appeared exceedingly dreadful, now appear unspeakably glorious. His sovereignty appears glorious, because now we see he is fit to be a sovereign, and that it is fit and right he should do what he will with his own. His justice appears glorious, because now we see the infinite evil of sin; and a consideration of his infinite understanding and almighty power enhances his glory. And while we view what he is, and see his greatness and glory, and consider his original, entire,

underived right to all things, we begin to see why he assumes the character of most high God, supreme Lord, and sovereign Governor of the whole world; and we resign the throne to him, and take our places, and become his willing subjects; and our hearts are framed to love him, and fear him, and trust in him through Jesus Christ; and we give up ourselves to him, to walk in all his ways, and keep all his commands, seeking his glory. And thus a sight and sense of the infinite dignity, greatness, glory, and excellency of the most high God lays the first foundation for a divine love. God's being what he is, is the primary reason that he requires us to love him with all our hearts; and it is the first motive of a genuine love.

I might now pass on to consider the additional obligations we are under to love God, but that it may be profitable to stop a while, and a little consider the nature and properties of this first, and greatest, and most fundamental obligation, and take a view of some important consequences necessarily following therefrom. And here,

1. This obligation is binding antecedently to any consideration of advantage or disadvantage, of rewards or punishments, and even prior to any consideration of the positive will and law of God himself.

2. It is infinitely binding.

3. It is eternally binding.

4. It is unchangeably binding.

5. It is that from which all other obligations originally derive their binding nature.

1. This obligation which we are under to love God with all our hearts, resulting from the infinite excellency of the divine nature, is binding *antecedently to any consideration of advantage or disadvantage, of rewards or punishments, or even of the positive will and law of God himself.* To love God with all our hearts, naturally tends to make us happy, and the contrary, to make us miserable; and there are glorious rewards promised on the one hand, and dreadful punishments threatened on the other. And God, as Governor of the world, has, with all his authority, by his law, expressly required us to love him with all our hearts, and forbidden the contrary; and all these things are binding; but yet the infinite excellency of the divine nature lays us under bonds prior to any consideration of these things. So that if our interest did not at all lie at stake, and if there had never been any express law in the case, yet it would be right, and our indispensable duty, to love God with all our hearts. His being infinitely lovely in himself, makes it our duty to love him; for he is in himself worthy of our highest

esteem. He deserves it; it is in the nature of things his due; and that antecedent to any selfish consideration, or any express law in the case. To suppose the contrary, is to deny the infinite amiableness of the divine nature, and to take away the very foundation of the law itself, and the very reason of all rewards and punishments. For if our supreme love is not due to God, then he is not infinitely lovely; and if he does not deserve to be loved with all our hearts, why does he require it? And if, in the nature of things, it is not right and fit that we should love him, and the contrary unfit and wrong, what grounds are there for rewards or punishments? So that it is evident the infinite excellency of the divine nature binds us, and makes it our duty, antecedent to any consideration of advantage or disadvantage, rewards or punishments, or even of the positive will and law of God, to love God with all our hearts. And therefore our love must primarily take its rise from a sense of this infinite excellency of the divine nature, as has been before observed; and that seeming love, which arises merely from selfish considerations, from the fear of punishment or hope of reward, or because the law requires it, and so it is a duty and must be done, is not genuine, but is a selfish, a mercenary, and a forced thing. How evidently, therefore, do those discover their hypocrisy, who are wont to talk after the following manner: "If I am elected, I shall be saved, let me do what I will; and if I am not elected, I shall be damned, let me do what I can, and therefore it is no matter how I live." And again, after this sort: "If I knew certainly that God had made no promises to the duties of the unregenerate, as some pretend, I would never do any more in religion." Surely they had as good say that they have no regard at all to the infinite excellency of the divine nature, but are entirely influenced by selfish and mercenary motives in all they do. They do not seem to understand that they are under infinite obligations to love God with all their hearts, and obey him in every thing, resulting from God's being what he is, and that antecedent to all selfish considerations. Such know not God. (1 John iii. 6.)

2. This obligation, resulting from the intrinsic excellency and amiableness of the divine nature, is *infinitely* binding, because this excellency and amiableness is in itself infinite. Our obligation arises from his desert, but he infinitely deserves our love, because he is infinitely lovely. When any person is lovely and honorable, reason teaches us that we ought to love and honor him, and that it is wrong to dislike and despise him. And the more lovely and honorable, the greater is our obligation to love and honor him, and the more aggravatedly vile is it to

treat him with contempt. Since, therefore, God is a being of infinite dignity, greatness, glory, and excellency, hence we are under an infinite obligation to love him with all our hearts, and it is infinitely wrong not to do so. Since he is infinitely worthy to be honored and obeyed by us, therefore we are under an infinite obligation to honor and obey him; and that with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Hence,

(1.) Perfect love and perfect obedience deserves no thanks at his hands. If we perfectly love him, even with all our hearts, and give up ourselves entirely and forever to him, to do his will and seek his glory, and so cordially delight in him as to take up our full and everlasting contentment in him, yet, in all this, we do but our duty, and we do no more than what we are under an infinite obligation to do; and therefore we deserve no thanks. (Luke xvii. 9, 10.) Yea, we do nothing but that in which consists our highest perfection, glory, and blessedness; and therefore, instead of deserving thanks, we ought to account it an exceeding great privilege that we may thus love the Lord, live to him, and live upon him. (Psalm xix. 10.)

When, therefore, eternal life was promised in the first covenant as the reward of perfect obedience, it was not under the notion of any thing being merited; nor did it ever enter into the hearts of the angels in heaven to imagine they merited any thing by all their love and service; for from their very hearts, they all join to say, "Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and praise forever." And they deserve no thanks for their doing so, for they but own the very truth.

When, therefore, sinful men, poor, hell-deserving creatures, think it much that they should love and serve God so well, and take so great pains in religion; and are ready to think that God and man ought highly to value them for their so doing, and are always telling God and man how mighty good they are; as, "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican;" no, far from this, I am one of the best men in all the world; "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess;"—this appeared to him such a mighty thing, that he thought it quite worth while to tell God himself of it:—now, I say, when this is men's temper, it is a sign they neither know God nor love him; for, if they did, they could not set so high a price upon their duties, since he is so infinitely deserving. The plain truth is, such have intolerably mean thoughts of God, and intolerably high thoughts of themselves; they are brimfull of spiritual pride and self-righteousness: and such are exceedingly hateful in the sight of God. They implicitly say that God is not infinitely glorious,

and infinitely worthy of all love and honor; he does not deserve it; it is not his due; but rather, he is beholden to his creatures for it, and ought to render them many thanks for their love and service. The language of their hearts is, "God has so little loveliness that it is much to love him." Like a bad mother-in-law, who thinks it nothing to toil for her own children, because she loves them, but grudges every step she takes for the rest, and thinks every little a great deal, because she cares not for them; so, such men think it nothing to rise early and sit up late, to get the world; to get riches, honor, and pleasure; for they love themselves, but think it much to take the tenth part of the pains in religion, because they love not God. Their whole frame of mind casts infinite contempt upon the glorious majesty of heaven, to whom all honor is infinitely due, and in whose service all the hosts of heaven account themselves perfectly blessed. They feel as if they deserved to be paid for all.

True, there are glorious rewards promised in the law and in the gospel. But why? and upon what grounds? A man may be said to be rewarded in three different senses. First. When he receives what he strictly deserves, as a hireling receives his wages at night. But in this sense the angels in heaven are not capable of a reward; for, in strict justice, they deserve nothing. (Luke xvii. 9, 10. Rom. xi. 35.) They are no hirelings, for God has a natural, original, underived right to them, as much as he has to the sun, moon, and stars; and these, therefore, deserve to be paid for their shining, as much as the angels do for their working. Besides, if the angels do love God, it is no more than he infinitely deserves. And further, the services of angels do not profit God, and so lay him under no obligations, any more than the birds profit the rising sun by their morning songs, and so lay the sun under obligations to shine all day. "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?" And yet, even in this gross sense, self-righteous persons feel, at heart, as if they deserved a reward for their good duties; though perhaps they are not willing to own it. Hence they are so apt to think it would be very hard, unjust, and cruel, if God should damn them for their past sins, notwithstanding all their good duties. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?" But, secondly. A man may be said to be rewarded, when, although, in strict justice, he deserves nothing, yet he receives great favors at the hands of God, in testimony of the divine

approbation of his person and services. And thus the angels in heaven, though they deserve nothing, yet have eternal life bestowed upon them, as a reward to their perfect obedience, in testimony of the divine approbation. God rewards them, not because they do him any good, nor because they deserve any thing at his hands; but because he infinitely loves righteousness, and to appear as an infinite friend to this, in his public conduct, as moral Governor of the world. The most that can be said of the holiest angel in heaven is, that he is fit to be approved in the sight of God, because he is perfectly such as God requires him to be. And now, because God loves to put honor upon virtue, and to exercise the infinite bountifulness of his nature, therefore he gives them the reward of eternal life. And thus God promises us eternal life, upon condition of perfect obedience, in the first covenant; as if God had said, "If you will love me with all your heart, and obey me in every thing, as you are bound in duty to do; then, although you will deserve nothing, yet, as becomes a holy and good God, a kind and bountiful Governor, I will make you everlastingly blessed in the enjoyment of myself; and that in testimony of my approbation of your perfect and steady fidelity." And so, by covenant and promise, this reward would have been due, had the condition been performed. Hence that in Rom. iv. 4,—"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of *debt*." And now here self-righteous persons are wont to come in with their works, and insist upon their right, and plead the reason of things, as well as the promise. "If we do," say they, "as well as we can,—which is all that God does or can in justice require of us,—surely he will accept of us; it would be cruel to cast us off; his goodness and faithfulness are engaged for us." Just as if they had now made full amends for all their past sins, by their repentance and reformation; and grown to be as good as angels, by taking some little pains in religion! For the best angel in heaven does not pretend to any other title to blessedness than this; namely, that he has done as well as he can, and that this is all that God has required; and although he is an unprofitable servant, yet he depends upon the promise, the goodness, and faithfulness of his bountiful Creator. Indeed, self-righteous persons may pretend to expect all for Christ's sake; and say, that what they do only entitles them to an interest in him; but it is all mere pretence; for still they think that God is bound to give them an interest in Christ and eternal life, if they do as well as they can; and would think God dealt very hardly with them, if he did not; so that their real dependence, at bottom, is upon their own goodness, their own worth or

worthiness, to make amends for past sins, and recommend them to God, and entitle them to all things; the infinite absurdity of which will be evident presently. Again, thirdly. A man may be said to be rewarded, when he neither deserves any thing, nor is it fitting that his person and conduct, considered merely as they are in themselves, should be approved; but ought to be condemned, according to reason, and according to God's righteous law, they being so sinfully defective; nevertheless, such a man may be said to be rewarded, when, merely on the account of his interest in the righteousness and worthiness of Christ, his person and performances are accepted, and peculiar favors shown him. And in this way are believers accepted, according to the covenant of grace, and entitled to the reward of eternal life. (Phil. iii. 8, 9, Eph. i. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5.) Now, those who look for a reward in this way, will be so far from thinking it much which they have done for God, that they will forever set all down for nothing, and worse than nothing,* — their best duties being so sinfully defective, — and judge themselves worthy of hell every day and every moment. And all their dependence will be on Christ's worthiness, and the free grace of God through him. (Luke xviii. 13. Rom. iii. 24.) And all that is said in the New Testament about God's rewarding the believer's good works, being viewed in this light, gives not the least countenance to a self-righteous spirit, but militates directly against it. And, indeed, if we were as perfect as the angels in heaven, it appears, from what has been said, that we should deserve no thanks. It is impudent, therefore, and wicked, it is contemptuous, and, in a sort, blasphemous, and most God-provoking, for a proud, conceited Pharisee to feel as he does in his self-righteous frames. And God might expostulate with such a one in this manner: "What, is there so little loveliness in me? And is it so great, so hard, so self-denying, to love me, that you think it such a

* *Worse than nothing.* I do not mean, that an imperfect and very defective conformity to the law is worse, and more odious in God's sight, than no conformity at all; but only that there is more odiousness than amiableness in such defective services; and that, therefore, we are, in the sight of God, on their account, more proper objects of hatred and punishment, than of love and reward, if considered merely as in ourselves, without any respect to our relation to Christ; so that, in point of recommending ourselves to God, we do by our best duties, thus considered, rather discommend ourselves in his sight; and, in this sense, they are worse than nothing; they are even so far from paying our constant dues, that, in the sight of God, they constantly run us into debt. We are infinitely to blame in our best frames and best duties, and have not any thing in them which tends, in God's sight, in the least degree, to counterbalance our blame. But if any are desirous to see this point fully explained and proved, and all objections answered, I refer them to Mr. Edwards's excellent discourse on Justification by Faith alone.

mighty thing! and expect now, that all past sins shall be forgiven, and my favor secured, for this good frame! yea, and that I shall give you heaven into the bargain! What, are your obligations to me so small, that I must be so much beholden to you for your love! What, did you never hear that I was the Lord! and that it was I that stretched abroad the heavens! and that you are my clay, whom I formed and fashioned for myself? Begone, thou impudent wretch, to hell, thy proper place; thou art a despiser of my glorious majesty, and your frame of spirit savors of blasphemy. Know it, I am not so mean as you imagine, nor at all beholden to you for your love." And this is one reason that the sacrifice of the wicked is such an abomination to the Lord, not only when they pray with a view to recommend themselves to their fellow-men, but also when, in doing their best, they only design to ingratiate themselves with God. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination," — even his very best, — "how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind!" The infinite greatness, glory, and excellency of God, and the infinite obligation thence resulting which we are under to love him with all our hearts, and obey him in every thing, renders a self-righteous spirit unspeakably odious, and infinitely provoking in the eyes of a holy God. But this will appear still plainer under the next particular. To proceed, therefore:

(2.) If we are under an infinite obligation to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and take everlasting delight in him, because of his infinite glory and excellency, then the least disposition to disesteem him, to be indifferent about his interest and honor, or to disrelish communion with him; or the least disposition to love ourselves more than God, and be more concerned about our inferest and honor than about his, and to be pleased and delighted in the things of the world more than in him, must, consequently, be infinitely sinful,* as is self-evident.

When, therefore, the great Governor of the world threatens eternal damnation for the least sin, (Gal. iii. 10,) he does the thing that is perfectly right; for an infinite evil deserves an infinite punishment.

* The least sin may be an infinite evil, because of the infinite obligation we are under to do otherwise, and yet all sins not be equally heinous; for there is as great a difference among infinites as among finites — I mean, among things that are infinite only in one respect. For instance, to be forever in hell is an infinite evil, in respect of the duration; but yet the damned are not all equally miserable. Some may be a hundred times as miserable as others, in degree; although the misery of all is equal in point of durstion.

Hence, also, it is no wonder that the holiest saint on earth mourns so bitterly, and loathes and abhors himself so exceedingly for the remaining corruptions of his heart; for, if the least disposition to depart from God and disrelish communion with him, and to be careless about his honor and interest, is infinitely sinful, then the best men that ever lived have infinite reason always to lie as in the dust, and have their hearts broken. Although it be so with them, that all which the world calls good and great appears as dross to them; and it is nothing to them to part with friends and estate, honor and ease, and all, for Christ; and although they have actually suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, not worth mourning about, or repining after; yet, notwithstanding all these attainments, attended with the fullest assurance of eternal glory in the world to come, they have infinite reason to do as they do, to dislike themselves, to hate themselves, and lie down in the dust all in tears, because still there is such a remaining disposition in their hearts to disesteem the Lord of glory; to neglect his interest, and depart from him; and because they are so far from being what they ought to be, notwithstanding the obligations lying upon them are infinite. O, this is infinitely vile and abominable, and they have reason indeed, therefore, always to loathe and abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes; yea, they are infinitely to blame for not being more humble and penitent. A sight and sense of these things made Job lie down in the dust, and mourn so bitterly for his impatience under his past afflictions, though he had been the most patient man in the world. This made the Psalmist call himself a beast. And hence Paul called himself the chief of sinners, and cried out, "I am carnal, sold under sin; O, wretched man that I am!"—and hated to commend himself when the Corinthians drove him to it, and seemed to blush at every sentence, and in a sort, recalled his words—"I am not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles, yet I am nothing. I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I." Such a sight of things kills a self-righteous spirit at root, in the most exalted saint; for he has nothing, all things considered, to make a righteousness of, but, in strict justice, merits eternal damnation every hour, and does nothing to make the least amends.

For, if perfect obedience merits no thanks, as was before observed, and if the least sin is an infinite evil, and deserves an infinite punishment, as we have now seen, then a whole eternity of perfect obedience would do just nothing towards making the least amends for the smallest sin; much less will

the best services of the highest saint on earth. And, consequently, when Paul came to die, he deserved to be damned, considered merely as in himself, as much as when he was a bloody persecutor, breathing out threatenings and slaughter; yea, and a great deal more too: for all his diligence and zeal in the service of Christ did just nothing towards making the least amends for what was past; and his daily short-comings and sinful defects run him daily infinitely more and more into debt, which he did nothing to counterbalance. And hence Paul accounts himself to be nothing, as well he might; and all his attainments to be, in a sense, not worth remembering, and looks upon himself the "chief of sinners," and "less than the least of all saints," and durst venture his soul upon nothing but mere free grace through Jesus Christ. And thus it is with every believer, even the most holy, although he daily sees what a God he has sinned against; how he has sinned against him, and does, from a gracious respect to God, mourn for sin, for all sin, as the greatest evil, and sincerely turns from all to the Lord, and gives up himself to God, to love him and live to him forever; yet he feels that all this makes no amends at all for his sins, but that he really deserves to be damned for them as much as ever; yea, he feels that he is infinitely blameworthy for not being more humble, and penitent, and self-abhorring, and that his desert of damnation is infinitely increasing continually. And hence he looks upon the grace that saves him as absolutely and divinely free, and infinitely great; and always derives all his hopes of happiness from the free grace of God through Jesus Christ. And this is what the apostle means when he speaks of his "living by the faith of the Son of God," — of his "rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh." And this was the cause of his so earnestly longing to be found not in himself, but in "Christ; not having on his own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith." How directly contrary to all this is the temper of the blind, conceited Pharisee, as expressed by Maimonides, the Jew, who was professedly one of that sect! "Every man," says he, "hath his sins, and every man his merits: and he that hath more merits than sins is a just man; but he that hath more sins than merits is a wicked man." And this is the way of such men; they put their sins, as it were, into one scale, and their good duties into the other; and when they fancy their goodness outweighs their badness, then they look upon themselves in the favor of God. But to return:

From what has been said, we may learn, that the more

sensible any man is of the infinite glory and excellency of God, and of his infinite obligations thence resulting to love God with all his heart, and obey him in every thing, the clearer will he see that perfect obedience deserves no thanks, and that the least sin is an infinite evil, and deserves an infinite punishment; and so he will renounce his own righteousness, die to himself, and come down to nothing, more and more; and so will be proportionably more and more sensible of his absolute need of Christ and free grace. And hence the more holy a man grows, the more humble will he be. And, on the contrary, the more insensible a man is of God's infinite glory and excellency, and of his obligations thence resulting, the more will he value his duties, and the less evil will he see in sin, and the less sensible will he be of his ill desert, and of his need of Christ and free grace. And hence a self-righteous, impenitent, Christ-despising spirit reigns in all who know not God. And thus we see some of the consequences necessarily following from that infinite obligation to love God with all our hearts, which we are under, resulting from the infinite glory and excellency of the divine nature. But to pass on:

3. This obligation we are under to love God with all our hearts, arising from his infinite glory and excellency, is, in the nature of things, *eternally* binding. God, his being, perfections, and glory, will be eternal. God will always be infinitely amiable; always as amiable as he is now; and there will be always, therefore, the same reason that he should be loved for being what he is; even the very same reason that there is now. This obligation is therefore perpetually binding amidst all the changes of this life. Whether we are sick or well, in prosperity or in adversity; whether we are raised to honor with David, or live in affluence with Solomon; or whether we are in prison with Joseph, or on the dunghill with Job, or wandering about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, with those mentioned in the eleventh to the Hebrews, still this obligation upon us to love God is invariably the same. For God is always infinitely amiable in himself; yea, and always will be so, whether we are in the earth, or in heaven, or in hell. And therefore it always is, and always will be, our indispensable duty to love him with all our hearts, let what will become of us, and let our circumstances as to happiness and misery, be what they may.

Did our obligations to love God arise merely from a consideration of something else besides the eternal excellency of the divine nature, from something which might altogether cease in time, then might it possibly, some time or other, cease

to be our duty to love God with all our hearts. But assuredly it can never cease, until God ceases to be what he is. The infinite obligation hence arising will be eternally binding. Indeed, if all our obligations to love God did arise merely from selfish considerations, then in hell, where these selfish considerations will cease, it would cease to be a duty to love God. If I were obliged to love God only because he loves me, is kind to me, and designs to make me happy, then, when he ceases to love me, to be kind to me, and to intend my happiness, all my obligations to him would cease; and it would be no sin not to love him. But now, since our obligations to love God arise originally from his being what he is in himself, antecedent to all selfish considerations; therefore it will forever remain our duty to love him, let our circumstances, as to happiness or misery, be what they will. And not to love him with all our hearts, will forever be infinitely wrong. Hence the guilt of the fallen angels has been increasing ever since their first apostasy, and the guilt of all the damned will be increasing to all eternity; and no doubt their punishment will increase in the same proportion. How inconceivably and infinitely dreadful, therefore, will be their case, who are thus continually sinking deeper and deeper in that bottomless pit of woe and misery! And indeed, if this be the case, hell may well be compared, as it is in Scripture, to a "bottomless pit."

4. This obligation, which we are under to love God with all our hearts, resulting from the infinite excellency of the divine nature, is also *unchangeably* binding. As unchangeable as the divine nature is, as unalterable as the divine beauty is, even so unchangeable, so unalterable, in the very nature of things, is this our infinite obligation to love him supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively. As God is infinitely lovely in himself, and unchangeably so, so it is self-evident we are under an infinite and invariable obligation to love him with all our hearts. This cannot but be always our duty. So long as God remains what he is, this will remain our duty. It will, in the nature of things, be unalterably right and fit to love him; and not to do so, unalterably unfit and wrong. Our sinking down into ever so bad a temper, and getting to be ever so remote from a disposition to love him, can no more free us from the obligation, than it can cause him to cease being amiable. He must cease to be amiable before our obligation thence arising can possibly cease to be binding. If there be no alteration in his infinite beauty, there can possibly be no alteration in the infinite obligation thence arising.

While God remains what he is, and while our natural powers and faculties are maintained in being, it must continue our duty to love God with all our hearts, and it cannot but be our duty. In the nature of things it is right; and the obligation is just as incapable of any alteration, as is the equality between twice two and four. The fallen angels are of so bad a temper, that the very thoughts of God will, doubtless, sooner than any thing, stir up all their hatred. But God deserves to be perfectly loved by them, as much as he did before their apostasy. There is a great alteration in the temper of their minds; but not the least shadow of change in the divine beauty. Their having contracted so bad and wicked a temper, cannot surely make it right and lawful for them to indulge it, and continue in it. Their impious revolt surely cannot free them from the authority and government of almighty God. He deserves their homage and subjection, as much as ever he did. The original ground of all still remains — he is still the Lord. The same may be said of fallen man; it is impossible that our bad temper should free us from our obligation to love God with all our hearts. It is still, in the nature of things, as wrong not to love God with all our hearts, as ever it was, or as it would have been, had we not joined with the fallen angels, and turned apostates. It must be so, unless our being of so bad and wicked a temper makes it right for us to continue of such a temper, and we not at all blameworthy for acting agreeably thereto; that is, unless our being so very bad and wicked makes us not at all to blame for our badness and wickedness. And so, according to this rule, the viler any creature grows, and the more averse to God and to all good, the less he is to blame; which is one of the grossest absurdities in the world. Therefore,

(1.) The divine law which requires us to love God with all our hearts, considered as a rule of duty, is, in the nature of things, unalterable, and absolutely incapable of any abatement, more or less. The thing required is, in the nature of things, our duty, antecedent to any consideration of an express law in the case; as that children ought to honor their parents, and neighbors do as they would be done by, are things in themselves right, and duties antecedent to any consideration of an express law in the case. (Eph. vi. 1.) These things would have been duties, if there had never been any laws made concerning them by God or man. Yea, they are, in their own nature, so right, that they cannot but be our duty; and to dishonor our parents, and cheat, and defraud, and injure our neighbor, cannot but be wrong. So, to love God with all our hearts is originally right and fit, and our duty; and would have

been so, had there never been any positive, express law in the case.

Now, the grand reason why God, the great Governor of the world, ever made a law requiring us to love him with all our hearts, was, because it was thus, in its own nature, so infinitely fit. And now, to suppose that he would repeal, or alter, or abate this law, when the grounds and reasons of his first making of it remain as forcible as ever; when the thing required is as right and fit as ever; and when it becomes him, as Governor of the world, still to require it as much as ever;—I say, to suppose such a thing, casts the highest reproach upon all his glorious perfections. It casts the highest reflection upon his infinite holiness, whereby he is infinitely inclined to love right and hate wrong; for it supposes him to release his creatures from doing right, and to allow them to do wrong—a little, at least. It casts the highest reflection upon his impartial justice, whereby he is infinitely inclined to give every one his due; for it supposes him to release his creatures from giving unto God the glory which is his due, and to allow them to keep back part, at least. It casts the highest reflection upon his stability and truth; for it supposes him to alter his law when there is no reason for it; yea, it reflects even upon his goodness itself; for it is so far from being a benefit to his creatures to have this excellent law altered, which is so completely suited to the perfection and happiness of their nature, that it would be one of the greatest and sorest calamities which could happen—like the altering all the good laws and rules in a family, merely to humor and gratify a rebellious child, who will not be governed. Such a child should be made to conform to the wholesome laws of the family, and not the laws be abated and brought down to a level with his bad temper and perverse humor. And, finally, it casts the highest reflection upon the infinite wisdom of the great Governor of the world; for it supposes him to go counter to his own honor and to the good of his creatures, to counteract all his perfections, and contradict the reason and nature of things; and that merely in condescension unto, and in compliance with, the sinful, corrupt taste and inclinations of an apostate, rebellious, God-hating world.

And now, how could the great Governor of the world clear and vindicate the honor of his great name, in making any abatements in this law, which requires us to love him with all our hearts? Would he say that he had before required more love than was his due? Surely nothing can be much more blasphemous than to suppose this. Would he say that he does not deserve so much as he did? Still it is equally blasphemous

to suppose this. Would he say that less than is his due is all that is his due? But this would be to contradict himself in express terms. Or would he openly profess to quit his right, and freely allow his creatures to despise him a little, and sin sometimes, in condescension unto and compliance with the corrupt inclinations of their sinful hearts? But this, in the nature of things, would be infinitely wrong and dishonorable. Upon what grounds, then, could the supreme Governor of the world go about to make abatements in a law so holy, just, and good, that only requires us to love him with all our hearts; which, in the nature of things, is so infinitely right and suitable? Or upon what ground, can we possibly desire any abatements to be made, unless we even profess that we do not like the law; that we are averse to loving God with all our hearts; that it is a very tedious, self-denying thing to us, and what we can by no means freely come into; and so, upon this footing, desire some abatements! Or, which is the same thing, honestly own, "that we love sin so dearly that God must tolerate us in it, or we cannot approve of his government."

But, indeed, God can as easily cease to be, as go about to license and tolerate the least sin; and he had rather heaven and earth should pass away, than that the least jot or tittle of his law should fail.

How can any body, therefore, once imagine that Christ came down from heaven and died, to purchase this abatement of the law of God, and procure this lawless liberty for his rebellious subjects? What! did he desert his Father's interest and honor, and the honor of his law and government, and spill his precious blood, that he might persuade the great Governor of the world to slacken the reins of government, and give out this impious license to iniquity? Surely to suppose this, is to make Christ a friend to sin, and an enemy to God.

What, then, do they mean, who, in their prayers, presume to thank God for the gracious abatements which he has made in his law? And what do ministers mean by telling their people, from the pulpit, that the law is abated, and that sincere obedience is all that is now required of us? Indeed, if poor secure sinners are made to believe that this was the great business Christ came into the world upon, no wonder if their impious hearts are pleased, and if they seem to love Christ, and prize the gospel, and give thanks to God for this great goodness and condescension; for hereby they are delivered from that strictness in religion which they hate, and a wide door is opened for them to sin without blame. Yea, they have the comfort to think that it is no sin not to love God with all their heart, with all

their soul, and with all their strength. And, generally, a very little matter in religion, they think, will serve. And now it is good times, and they bless themselves. But, alas! they feed upon the wind. A deceived heart hath turned them aside.

But, by the way, to what purpose was it for Christ to die to purchase this abatement? What need was there of it? Or what good could it do? For if the law really required too much, the Governor of the world was obliged, in justice, to make some abatements. And so, the death of Christ in the case was perfectly needless. And if the law required but just enough, the Governor of the world could not in justice make any abatements; and so Christ must have died in vain, and totally lost his end.

But, indeed, Christ never came into the world upon this design; as he expressly declares in Matt. v. 17, 18: "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." And this is the very thing he condemns the Pharisees for, through all this chapter, that they in effect taught this doctrine, that the law was abated; that they taught that although the law did forbid some external and more gross acts of sin, yet it did not the first stirring of corruption at heart, and some lesser iniquities. For instance, that they must not commit murder; but that it was no harm to be angry without cause, and speak reproachfully, and keep a secret grudge at heart. (21—26.) That they must not commit adultery; but that it was no harm to have secret lascivious thoughts. (27—30.) That they must not be guilty of perjury; but that there was no harm in little petty oaths in common conversation. (33—37.) That they must not hate their friends; but there was no harm in hating their enemies. (43—47.) These, and such like allowances, they taught, were made in the law; and so that such things were not sinful. But our Savior condemns their doctrine, as false and damning; and insists upon it, that the law is not abated, and never shall be; but says it still requires us to be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect; and declares, that if our righteousness exceedeth not the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, (who were so much for abating the law,) we shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven; so far was our blessed Savior from any design to abate the holy law of God, or lessen our obligations to a perfect conformity to it. And, indeed, if Christ had died, and should die a thousand times, to purchase an abatement of the law, (if it be lawful to make such a supposition,)

it would be to no purpose; for it cannot be abated unless God ceases to be what he is. For so long as God is infinitely lovely, we shall necessarily be under an infinite obligation to love him with all our heart and with all our strength; and it will necessarily be infinitely wrong not to do so. The truth is, that God's sending his Son into the world to die for the redemption of sinners, instead of freeing us from our original natural obligations to keep the law, binds us more strongly so to do; as we shall afterwards see. "Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever:" "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting." "Thou hast founded them forever." And therefore, "Every one of them will endure forever." As if the Psalmist had said, "The thing required in thy law is, in its own nature, right, everlastingly right; and therefore, as Governor of the world, thou hast by law forever settled and established it as duty; by a law never to be altered, but to endure forever. And forever, therefore, will it endure."

Obj. But is it fair and just for God to require more of his creatures than they can do?

Ans. What are we come to, in this apostate world, that we cannot see it to be just and fair, in the great Governor of heaven and earth, the infinitely glorious God, to require us, as his creatures, so much as to love him with all our hearts? What! is this too much? Is this more than he deserves from us? Or does the truth lie here; that we hate him so, that we cannot find it in our hearts to love him; and therefore cry, "He must not insist upon it; or if he does, he deals unjustly, and is very hard with us"? But is not this the very thing those citizens did, who hated their prince, and sent after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us"? These hints may serve as an answer for the present. But of this more hereafter.

But while some are pleading that Christ died to purchase an abatement of the law, others carry the point still further, and say that Christ died entirely to disannul it; and that now it wholly ceases to be a rule of life to believers: whereas one great and declared design of Christ coming into the world was, to recover his people to a conformity thereto. (Tit. ii. 11—13.) O, how men love their corruptions, and hate God and his holy law, and long to have it cashiered and removed out of the world, that so they may live as they list, and yet escape the reproaches of their consciences here, and eternal punishment hereafter! But God sitteth King forever, and will

assert the rights of his crown, and maintain the honor of his majesty, and the glory of his great name, and vindicate his injured law; although it be in the eternal damnation of millions of his rebellious subjects. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." And here, by the way, we may see what an aversion men have to right thoughts of God and divine things; and may be convinced of the absolute necessity of a supernatural, all-conquering light, to remove these prejudices, and make men see and believe the truth, and love, and cordially embrace it. (John viii. 47. 1 Cor. ii. 14.) A holy God does not appear infinitely glorious and amiable to an unholy heart; and sinners, not seeing the grounds of loving God with all their hearts, do not see the reason of the law; they do not see how holy, just, and good the law is, and the carnal mind being enmity against God, is, at the same time, enmity against the law, which is a transcript of the divine nature. And hence sinners do not love to believe either God or his law to be what they really are. And this temper makes them blind to what the Scripture says, and leads them to frame a false image of God, and entertain false notions of his law, that they may have a God and a law both to their own minds.

And now, as are men's notions of the law, such are their notions of religion; the essence of which principally consists in a conformity to the law.

Hence, here is one — he pleads for great abatements in the law, and he contents himself with the mere form of religion. He is not unjust, nor an extortioner, nor an adulterer; but much better than some of his neighbors. He prays in his family, goes to public worship, and attends the sacrament, and thinks himself a very good man; like him in Luke xviii. 9, 11, etc. But as for the doctrines relating to our natural depravity, regeneration, conversion, faith, communion with God, and all the inside of religion, he understands nothing about them; they seem as strange as it did to Nicodemus to hear Christ discourse about the new birth. And all the talk about the inward influences of the Holy Spirit, in awakening, convincing, humbling, and converting a sinner, and in enlightening, teaching, quickening, comforting, and sanctifying a believer, is quite unintelligible; for these things do not come into his notions of religion. According to his opinion, the law is brought down so low, that it is an easy thing to become a good man. The change is but small, and there is scarce any need of the Spirit's help; much less any room for

the exercise of sovereign grace; for he is so good-natured, that he can become good of his own free will, (that is, according to his notions of goodness,) and do that which shall effectually entitle him to the promises: and thus he has the staff in his own hand. And now here is a charming religion, perfectly suited to the taste of an apostate world; for it is calculated to quiet the conscience, while the heart lies out estranged from God and dead in sin. (Rom. vii. 8, 9.) Especially, so much of it as is for their credit, and apparently serves their worldly interest, will pretty readily and heartily be fallen in with. And — the best have their failings; no man is perfect; and I endeavor to be sincere; and the best have their doubts; assurance is not to be attained — and such like pleas, help to keep their consciences secure. And now, O, how they love those ministers that cry, Peace, peace! but hate those that would search things to the bottom, and sound an alarm to secure sinners and deluded hypocrites. The same temper that makes them hate God and his law, makes them hate his ministers too. And they are for another kind of God, and for another kind of law, another kind of religion, and another kind of ministers, that they may have all to their mind. And when all is done, they are confident they are now in the right, because they are suited. They love to have it so, and therefore firmly believe it is so.

Hence, again, here is another, who has been mightily terrified, and in great distress, under a sense of the wrath of God and the dreadfulness of damnation; but, in the distressing hour, he has had it revealed to him, (by the spirit of God, he thinks,) that his sins are forgiven; and now he is sure of heaven, and is ravished at the thoughts of eternal glory; he holds it a great sin to doubt; and all his religion consists in faith and joy, that is, in believing that his sins are forgiven, and rejoicing in his blessed, and happy, and safe estate, and in the expectation of future glory. But as for a real conformity to the law, it makes up no part of his religion. He understands rightly nothing what the law requires; he is neither sensible of his duty to God, nor to his fellow-men; yea, he hates to hear any thing about law or duty. It is all legal, he cries, and tends to kill religion, and to wound weak Christians, and grieve and drive away the spirit of grace; and no preaching suits his taste, but what consists in telling over and commending such experiences as his, and in setting forth the love of God and Christ to such, and calling upon such to believe and rejoice, and never doubt their state again. And, in general, those things which tend to strengthen his confidence and

increase his joy, he esteems right and good; and all things of a contrary tendency he esteems wrong and bad. This seems to be his only criterion of right and wrong, and the only rule he makes use of in drawing up a judgment; but as for the law, it is of no use with him. There is doubtless many a man that feels, and acts, and lives, as if the law was abated, who yet will not plead for that doctrine. So, doubtless, there is many a man that feels, and acts, and lives as if the law wholly ceased to be a rule of life, who yet will not venture to say so. The force of education, and their worldly interest and credit, keep men many times from showing what they are by an open profession: however, secretly this temper reigns within them; yea, sometimes it breaks out into open light, in their visible conduct. But as strange as it may seem, there are multitudes that not only have the root of these things in their hearts, but really believe them, and openly profess and plead for them. Hence it is, on the one hand, that the Arminian, Neonomian, and Pelagian errors have taken their rise, and the Antinomian on the other. Wrong notions of God lie at the bottom; and then wrong notions of the law; and then wrong notions of religion in general: and all originally proceed and grow up out of the wrong temper of men's minds; for all unregenerate men would fain have a God, and a law, and a religion to suit the temper of their hearts. "For all people will walk every one in the name of his God."

In the mean time, the truly godly man, who sees that the obligation which he is under to love God with all his heart, resulting from the excellency of the divine nature, is unchangeable, and that the law which requires this is unalterable, instead of going about to contrive a religion that may suit the natural temper of his heart, is convinced that the temper of his heart is the very thing that must be changed. He is convinced of his infinite obligation to be altogether such as the law requires him to be, and that he is infinitely blamable for the least defect. Hence those words, "The law is holy, just, and good; the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin: O, wretched man that I am!" do exactly express the thoughts of the most exalted saint on earth; yea, even of the great St. Paul himself. Indeed, had St. Paul thought that the law was wholly disannulled, or much abated, he might then have imagined that he was so good as to be quite free from sin, or pretty near being so, and been ready to speak the language of the Pharisee — "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men." But now, notwithstanding all his high and wonderful attainments, yet when he considered what the law was

which he was under, and how very far he was from being exactly what that required, the native language of his humble heart is, "I am carnal, sold under sin! O, wretched man that I am!"* And now the apostle, from a sense of his infinite obligations to be what the law requires, and of his great distance from this, forgets the things which are behind; and he runs — he wrestles — he fights — he strives — he keeps under his body — he lays aside every weight; in short, he appears like a man in a perfect agony; so great was his sense of duty, and so much had he to do. And, at the same time, from a sense of his impotency and of his unworthiness, of his need of the Redeemer and the Sanctifier, it is his maxim to pray always, and to ask all things in the name of Christ. Now, in his example we have the temper which prevails more or less in every godly man exactly painted; and thus we have had pictured in miniature three different sorts of religion, arising from three different notions of the law. The picture is begun; and, in the sequel, I purpose to paint all three as near to the life as I can, that we may see what they are, and wherein they differ; which is right, and which is wrong. But so much for the first inference, that the law, as a rule of duty, cannot be repealed or abated. And now to proceed:

2. From what has been said, it is evident that the law, in its threatenings of eternal damnation for the least sin, is equally incapable of any repeal or abatement. For if our obligation to love God with all our hearts, and obey him in every thing, resulting from the divine perfections, is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; and if therefore the least sin necessarily be infinitely evil, and deserving of an infinite punishment, and unalterably so, then the law, considered as threatening eternal damnation for the least sin, is, in its own nature, unalterably holy and just; and consequently it cannot be repealed, consistently with the holiness, justice, and honor of the great Governor of the world. If the Governor of the world had, in a mere arbitrary manner, made a law that sin should be punished with eternal damnation, then he might, in a mere arbitrary manner, have repealed it: but since, in the nature of things, justice called for it, that such a law should be made; therefore, so long as the grounds and reasons of the law remain, the law cannot, in justice, be repealed.

* Some have thought that St. Paul had arrived so nigh to perfection, that he could not speak these words of himself. Their mistake seems to arise from their wrong notions of the law, to which St. Paul compared himself, and according to which he drew up his judgment. And from the same source it seems to be, that they can think those words applicable to the unregenerate — "I delight in the law of God after the inward man;" when in truth, the unregenerate are, in their temper, diametrically opposite to the law. (Rom. viii. 7.)

None can deny but that the great Governor of the world has actually made a law that sin shall be punished with eternal damnation; and none can deny but that this law is to be put in execution, to the full, at and after the great judgment day: but if justice had not called for it, surely the infinitely good Governor of the world would never have made such a law, much less would he ever put it in execution; for, to make and execute such a law, in a merely arbitrary, sovereign manner, when, in the nature of things, justice does not call for it, would be infinitely cruel and tyrannical, and perfectly inconsistent with the divine perfections, as is self-evident. (Gen. xviii. 25. Ezek. xviii. 25.)

But, then, if the great Governor of the world made this law not arbitrarily, but because, in the nature of things, justice called for it, then, so long as the reason and ground of the law remain, the law itself cannot, in justice, ever be repealed. If justice called for its being made, then it cannot be unmade, consistently with justice, so long as the ground and reason of it remain, as is self-evident. But the reason of the law is, in the nature of things, unalterable; for the reason of the law was the infinite evil of sin, whereby it deserved an infinite punishment. As long, therefore, as sin remains an infinite evil, so long must the law stand unrepealed; but sin will always be an infinite evil, so long as we are under infinite obligations to love God with all our hearts, and obey him in every thing, which we shall always be, so long as God remains infinitely glorious and amiable, and this will be forever; therefore, this law can never possibly, consistently with divine justice, be repealed.

For any, therefore, to desire to have it repealed, is to turn enemy to the holiness, and justice, and honor of the supreme Ruler of the world, as well as to his law and government; and argues that they have no regard to the rectitude and fitness of things, but only to self-interest; as those among men are real enemies to the civil government who desire the good and wholesome laws thereof to be repealed. And it is upon this ground that St. Paul concludes carnal men to be at enmity against God, because they are enemies to his law. For if men loved God, they would be disposed to love his law and government, which express his nature.

To suppose, therefore, that the Son of God came into the world and died, that the law, in its threatenings, might be repealed, is to suppose that he also is turned an enemy to God; to his holiness and justice; to his law and government; and that he is properly gone over to be on the side of his Father's rebellious subjects.

Besides, to what purpose would it have been, on the hypothesis of these men, for Christ to have died, that the law, in its threatenings, might be repealed? What need was there of it? or what good would it have done? For if, in justice, it ought to have been repealed, there was no need of his dying to procure this; or if, in justice, it ought not to be repealed, then his dying could not procure it, and so would do no good. The righteous Governor of the world would have repealed it of his own accord, if it had been right and fit so to do; and if, in the nature of things, it was not right, then not any thing whatever could persuade him to do it.

But the truth is, Christ came into the world, and died to answer all the demands of the law; that so, although the sinner be saved, yet the law might never be repealed, but be firmly established; for the Governor of heaven and earth was utterly against the law being repealed, as a thing in itself infinitely unreasonable. And therefore the apostle says, "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law." And indeed it was nothing but God's infinite aversion to repeal the law, as a thing in itself infinitely unfit and wrong, that was the thing which made the death of Christ needful; for, if the law might have been repealed, sinners might have been saved without any more ado; but if it could not and must not be repealed, then the demands of it must be answered by some means or other, or every sinner damned. And now Christ stepped in and did this, and so secured the honor of God's holiness and justice, law and government, and opened a way for the sinner's salvation. And this account of the reason of Christ's death the Scriptures plainly give us. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ." For "without shedding of blood there is no remission." Therefore Christ was "set forth to be a propitiation for sin; to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." And hence, "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law."

Yea, the apostle evidently sets out upon this hypothesis, that the law is not repealed, but stands in full force. He lays this down as a first principle, in that argumentative discourse which we have in the three first chapters of his Epistle to the Romans. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." And taking this for granted,

he goes on to prove, "that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin," and so "the whole world guilty before God;" to the 19th verse of the 3d chapter. And hence he argues, "that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified." But now, if the law was repealed, the whole world was not guilty before God, nor any one in the world. "For sin is not imputed where there is no law." (Rom. v. 13.) And if the law was repealed, what need was there of such a long train of arguments, to prove that no flesh could be justified by the law? For it would have been enough to have said, that a repealed law could neither justify nor condemn any body. And why does he use such arguments as he does? For thus he reasons: "The law requires perfect obedience as a condition of life, and threatens tribulation and wrath against every soul of man that doth evil. But Jews and Gentiles have all sinned; therefore are all guilty and condemned according to law; and consequently cannot be cleared and justified by law." For all this reasoning supposes that the law is as much in force as ever it was. And, accordingly, he goes on to show, that the design of Christ's death was to answer the demands of the law, that there might be a way opened for the salvation of sinners, consistent with divine justice, and at the same time, the law not be made void, but established, as we have before observed. And now, this being the case,—

Hence, we find the Scriptures every where look upon those who have not a special interest in the righteousness of Christ, by faith, as being as much under the wrath of God and curse of the law, as if Christ had never died. "He that believeth not is condemned already." "The wrath of God abideth upon him." "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Thus the wrath of God is revealed against the unbeliever; yea, abides upon him; yea, the law condemns and curses him. But if the law had been repealed by the death of Christ, all the world would have been freed from the curse; for a repealed law can neither bless the righteous, nor curse the wicked; but stands for nothing.

And, hence, also, we find that Christless sinners, when awakened by the Holy Spirit to see and feel what a state they are in, are always convinced that they are under the wrath of God and curse of the law; and hereby are made to understand their need of a Savior. (Rom. iii. 19, 20.) But if the law had been repealed by the death of Christ, this could not be; for they would then have been under no wrath, nor curse; nor

would any have ever felt a spirit of bondage, as they do in every age of the world, and as they used to do in St. Paul's day. (Rom. viii. 15.) For it is the law only that works wrath.

And hence we shall find, even all the world shall find, and thousands and thousands to their everlasting sorrow, that when the day of judgment comes, the law shall be executed with the utmost severity upon all that "know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ." And God's justice, in so doing, will shine bright in the sight of all worlds; for he designs, on that day, to reveal the righteousness of his judgments: and hence it is called "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." But if the law is repealed by the death of Christ, and if God has told the world that he has repealed it, — for him now to revive it, and judge, and condemn the world by it, would be to cast contempt upon the death of Christ, and deceive his poor creatures, and unmercifully and unrighteously judge and condemn them, by a law that was repealed; a law they never were under, and so ought never to have been judged by. From the whole, therefore, it is evident that the law that threatens eternal damnation for the least sin, never has been, and never will be, repealed.

Well, then, if this be the case, may ministers thunder hell and damnation against a secure, wicked world; and well may poor sinners tremble under a sense of divine wrath, when their eyes begin to be opened to see where they are; for all those comforts that the formalist gets by thinking the law is abated or disannulled, and so his state safe, are but the result of an erroneous head, and a heart secure in sin. And what has been said under this particular, will rationally account for all the agony and distress of an awakened sinner. When God, the great Governor of the world, the revenger of sin, begins to make the poor sinner remember his ways and his doings, which have not been right, and see what a creature he is, and what a condition he is in, and be sensible of what he deserves; and when he comes to understand that his soul is forfeited, and that it is right that justice should take place, and that God is at liberty to do as he pleases, surely this must be heart-rending, soul-distressing, to a poor, sinful, guilty, hell-deserving creature.

And if God will not repeal the law, but still insist upon it that it is holy and just, no wonder the sinner is made to own it too, before ever he is pardoned; for it would be unbecoming the supreme Lord of the universe to grant a pardon to a guilty rebel, that is too high-hearted to own that the law, by which he stands condemned, is holy and just. O, how right it is, that the sinner should come down, and see, and know, and own

forever, that he is justly condemned, and, as such, apply himself to the sovereign grace of God, through Jesus Christ, for a pardon! And O, how sovereign, and free, and divine, is that grace that pardons and saves the poor, sinful, guilty, hell-deserving wretch, through Jesus Christ! (Rom. iii. 19, 27.) And thus, as God the Father honors the law by refusing to repeal it, and God the Son by answering its demands, so does God the Holy Ghost, by making the poor sinner see, and feel, and own, that it is holy and just, before ever he internally reveals the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, unto him; so that the law is honored, and sin is embittered, and the sinner humbled, and grace glorified, all at once. As, in the external revelation God has made in his word, the law is before the gospel, so it is in internal influences and operations of the Holy Spirit upon the elect; and that for the same reason, that the law might be a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.

To conclude: From all that has been said, we may learn what to think of the religion, and of the hopes of these two sorts of men. First. The legal hypocrite — who, supposing that the good old law is repealed and laid aside, and that a new law, only requiring sincere obedience, is established in its room, merely from self-love and for self-ends, sets about duty, and endeavors to be sincere; and here on this foundation builds all his hopes of acceptance in the sight of God. For since the law is not repealed, but stands in full force, therefore the religion of such is not that thing which God requires or will accept; and their new law is a whim, and their hopes are all built on the sand. Their whole scheme results from a total ignorance of God, and his law, and the present state of mankind; and is entirely built on falsehood. Secondly. The evangelical hypocrite — all whose faith and joy originally result from a supposed discovery of the love of God, or love of Christ, or that his sins are pardoned. This discovery is the foundation of his faith, and his faith is the foundation of his joy, and of all his religion. And yet the thing discovered is a lie; for, as has been proved, every one, until he is a believer, until he has acted faith, is not pardoned, but condemned; is not beloved of God, but under his wrath; and, therefore, to have pardon of sin, and the love of God discovered before the first act of faith, and to have such a discovery lay the foundation for the first act of faith, and a foundation for all religion, is to be imposed upon with a lie, and to have a gross falsehood lie at the foundation of their faith, their religion, and of all their hopes. The legal hypocrite may be convinced by such scriptures as these — Luke xviii. 9, 13. Rom. iii. 20—31; iv. 5; which prove that a man cannot find

acceptance with God by his own righteousness; and the evangelical hypocrite may be convinced by such scriptures as these — John iii. 18, 36. Acts iii. 19, which prove that a sinner is not pardoned till after faith. A true sight and sense of the law would effectually convince the one and the other, that all their hopes are built on wrong apprehensions of things, and that all their religion is counterfeit; and that they are yet in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity; and the one would no longer venture his soul on his own righteousness, nor the other on his discovery. The law's insisting upon perfect, sinless obedience, would convince the one that his own righteousness might not be depended upon; and the law's cursing every unbeliever, would convince the other that his discovery was false; and the law's requiring us to love God primarily for his own beauty, would convince both of their graceless estates, inasmuch as the religion of both primarily takes its rise from self-love. It is from the want of a realizing sight and sense of the nature and extent of the law, and that out of Christ we are exposed to all the curses thereof, that a sinful, guilty world are so insensible of their graceless, and their wretched and miserable condition, and so apt to flatter themselves that they are rich, and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing. "Without the law sin was dead. I was alive without the law once."

Thus we see that the obligation which we were under to love God with all our hearts, resulting from the infinite excellency of the divine nature, antecedent to all selfish considerations, is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably binding. And thus we see a variety of important consequences necessarily following therefrom; and I have insisted the longer upon the nature of this obligation, not only because it is the first and greatest, but because it has a mighty influence in all our additional obligations. For,

Fifthly and lastly. It is from the infinite excellency of the divine nature, that all our additional obligations originally derive their strength, their energy, their binding power. The infinite excellency of the divine nature so entirely lays the foundation of its being our duty to love God with all our hearts, that were it not for this, it would cease to be our duty, notwithstanding all other considerations. If he were not, by nature, God, it would not be fit that we should love and worship him as God, upon any account whatsoever; he could have no such right to us, or authority over us, as to make it our duty; nor could he render it our duty, by showing us any kindness whatsoever. Yea, if he were not, by nature, God, it would be wrong for us to pay him divine adoration; it would be idolatry; it would be wor-

shipping one as God, who, by nature, is not God — and by the same argument which the orthodox have been wont to use against the Arians, who deny the divinity of Christ. If he be not a divine person, he ought not to have divine worship paid him — I say, by the same argument, if God were not, by nature, God, it could not, upon any account, be our duty to love and worship him as God. It is his being, by nature, God; his being what he is, and his infinite excellency in being such, which therefore lays the original foundation of all our obligations, and which gives life and energy to all. And, accordingly, we may observe, that the original ground and reason upon which God, as Governor of the world, acts, in making a law that we should love him with all our hearts, is, because he is the Lord; as is evident from the tenor of the law itself: "Thou shalt love the Lord," etc., that is, because he is the Lord, etc. Yea, it is upon this ground, originally, that God takes it upon him to give all his laws to us; for this is the constant style — "Thus and thus shall ye do, for I am the Lord."

Those, therefore, who are influenced to love and worship God not at all because he is God, but altogether from other considerations, not at all from a sense of his infinite excellency, but altogether on other accounts, are so far from being truly religious, that they are, indeed, guilty of great wickedness in all they do. For although they pretend to love and worship God, yet it is not at all because he is God; though they pretend to pay divine adoration to him, yet it is not at all because he is a divine being; so that when they pretend to pay divine worship and adoration to God, it is merely from some selfish consideration; from self-love, and for self-ends; there is no true regard to God, but all centres in self: so that self, indeed, is their idol, and the only God they serve; and their pretending to love and worship God is mere mockery. When they pretend to love and worship God, it is not at all because he is God, not at all from a sense of his divine glory, but only to appease his anger and obtain his favor, or because they consider him as their Friend and Benefactor. And now, to come to God and pretend to worship him as if he was God, and yet not to do it at all because he is God, but for mean, and mercenary, and selfish ends, is a very complicated wickedness; and to think to please God in this way, and get into favor by this means, discovers such ignorance and contempt of God, and a frame of heart so full of secret blasphemy, spiritual idolatry, pride, and hypocrisy, as cannot easily be expressed: they practically deny his divinity, yet pretend to pay him divine worship: they pretend to serve God, yet really intend only to serve themselves: they make

as if they loved God, but only love themselves. Yet so intolerably mean are their thoughts of God, that they expect to please him by all this. To make the best of it, all that religion is mere hypocrisy, which does not primarily take its rise from a sense of the infinite excellency of the divine nature.

Thus, then, we see what is the first and chief motive of a genuine love to God. He is a being of infinite understanding, and of almighty power; infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; and so a being of infinite glory and excellency; and so infinitely amiable, and infinitely worthy to be loved with all our hearts. And this obligation is binding originally in itself, antecedent to a consideration of any other motive whatsoever; and it is infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably binding, and gives life, and energy, and strength to all other obligations. And hence, if we do love God with all our hearts, we do but our duty, and deserve no thanks; but we are infinitely to blame for the least defect, and can never do any thing to atone for it, but deserve everlasting damnation. And it will always be our duty thus to love God, and the least defect will be always thus blameworthy, let our circumstances, as to happiness or misery, be what they will. All our hearts will be always due to God, and we shall always stand bound to pay this debt, whether we have any heart for it or no; and God will always appear such an infinite enemy to the least defect, as in his law he has declared himself to be; nor is there any hope of our finding acceptance in his sight, unless it be by a union to, and interest in, him who has answered all the demands of the law, in the room of those who believe in him. And all pretence of love to God, which does not take its rise from this foundation, is but mere hypocrisy. All these consequences so necessarily follow from a supposition of the infinite excellency and amiableness of the divine nature, and so evidently, as that, if God be but seen aright, a sense of his infinite beauty will immediately assure the heart that these things are so. A sense of his infinite glory will make us see and feel that we are under infinite obligations to love him with all our hearts, and that we could deserve no thanks for doing so, but that the least defect is infinitely wrong. A sense of the infinite glory of God will effectually establish the heart in these things against all the subtle arguments and fair pretences of heretics. A sense of the infinite glory of God, immediately imparted to the soul by the Spirit of God, whereby the heart is thus divinely established in the belief of the truth, is, therefore, that unction from the Holy One, which all the saints have, whereby they are effectually secured from being finally led away by false teach-

ers; at least, that unction consists partly in this. (1 John ii. 20—27.) And at the same time that the people of God are thus established in the belief of these truths, relating to law and duty, from a sense of the infinite glory of God — I say, at the same time this sense of the infinite glory of God begets a disposition in the heart to conform to this law, and do this duty. And thus it is that God writes his law in our hearts, and puts it in our inward parts, when he intends to become our God, and to make us his people. And hence it begins to be the nature of the people of God to love him with all their hearts; and their views and their temper, and every thing else being thus entirely new, hence they are called new creatures. "Old things are passed away, and all things are become new." But now, this sense of the infinite glory of God, which thus lays the very lowest foundation of true religion, is entirely left out of all false religions. And by this, true religion stands distinguished, as something specifically different from all the false religions in the world. And hence we may observe, that it is spoken of in Scripture, as something peculiar to true saints, that they see God and know God. "Ye neither know me, nor my Father." "The world seeth me no more, but ye see me." "Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him." "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." "Every one that loveth, knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God." And the unregenerate, not knowing God, not having a sense of his infinite glory to lay the foundation of their love and of their religion, hence all their love and all their religion entirely take their rise from mere selfish considerations, and nothing but self-love lies at bottom. And hence it is natural for unregenerate men to think they deserve something for their duties, and as natural to be insensible of the infinite evil of their sins. And so it is their nature to magnify and be proud of their own goodness, and to extenuate and be unhumbled for their badness. And from hence results our native aversion to faith and repentance, and contrariety to the gospel way of salvation. And now new gospels, new sorts of faith and repentance are coined, new notions of religion contrived, to suit the depraved temper and vitiated taste of unhumbled, impenitent sinners, who are concerned to secure their own interest, but care not what becomes of God's honor. Hence errors take their rise, and professing Christians are divided into parties, and one runs this way, and another that, and all hope to get to heaven at last. And now, at length, after so great a variety of inferences and remarks, and so large a consideration of the first and chief motive of a genuine love to God, I proceed, —

2. To take a short view of the additional obligations which we lie under to love God with all our hearts. "I am the Lord" — this lays the first foundation, and leads the way, when from Mount Sinai the Almighty proclaims his law; but then he immediately goes on to add — "thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage." God has such a right to us, and such an authority over us, and has done so many things for us, and promised so many things to us, that our additional obligations to be the Lord's, to love him and live to him, are exceedingly great. Particularly,

Nothing is more reasonable than that we should be entirely dedicated to that God, whose we are originally, and by an entire, underived, and unalienable right; especially, considering what he is in himself, and that he is Lord of all things, and, by nature, God most high. Indeed, if our Creator was not, by nature, the most high God, then he could not be the supreme Lord of all things; for there would be one above him; and so we should not be his, entirely and absolutely; for he himself, and we his creatures, would belong, originally, to another; even to him that, by nature, would be the most high God; and him we ought to love and worship. But our Creator himself, being absolutely the first, and absolutely supreme, self-existent, and independent, the sole author and Lord of all things, as well as infinitely glorious in himself, his right to us is original, underived, and most absolute and entire; and therefore it is infinitely fit and suitable that we should be, in the constant frame and disposition of our hearts, absolutely, entirely, and wholly the Lord's, and that we should forever exert all our powers, to the very utmost, to promote his honor and interest. And it is infinitely unreasonable that we should ever set up ourselves, and be attached to any interest of our own, separate from his. And, inasmuch as he is infinitely better than we are, — yea, all the nations of the earth are less than nothing before him, — and has such an entire right unto us, his interest, therefore, should be regarded as more valuable than our own — yea, infinitely more. For if our own interest appears as valuable to us as his, we set ourselves upon a level with him, and claim as great a right to ourselves as he has; and if his interest does not appear as being of infinitely greater value to us than our own, we do not esteem him as being infinitely better than we are ourselves, and his right to us infinitely greater than our own right to ourselves is. It is, therefore, infinitely reasonable, since God is what he is, and has such a right to us as he has, that we should be constantly, from the

very bottom of our hearts, wholly his, and every moment live wholly to him, and always have his interest lie most near our hearts, as being of infinitely more worth, value, and importance than our own. As Moses, who, in a measure, was made partaker of this divine nature, in the anguish of his heart, cries, when God tells him he will cut off Israel, and make of him a great nation, "Lord, let my name be blotted out of thy book — let it be forgotten from among the living, and be never heard of again in the world that ever I was in being — But what will become of thy great name?" God's honor and interest were dear to him; but he comparatively cared not for his own at all. (Exod. xxxii. Num. xiv.)

But this our obligation to be entirely the Lord's, is still infinitely increased, if we consider the authority of the supreme Governor of the world, which, by his express law, has enjoined this upon us. It is not only infinitely fit, in its own nature, that we should love God with all our hearts, considering what he is in himself, and that we should be entirely for him, in the temper of our minds, considering what an entire right he has to us as his creatures, who have received all we have from him, and are absolutely dependent on him for all we want; but God has by law, as Governor of the world, enjoined this upon us as our duty, and that with all his authority. And now, considering what he is in himself, and the natural right he has to all things, and how entirely we are his, and absolutely under his government, his authority is infinitely binding; especially, considering how infinitely engaged he appears to be to see that his law be exactly obeyed, in promising eternal life on the one hand, and threatening eternal damnation on the other. This his infinite engagedness lays us under infinite bonds to be and do exactly what he requires.

But still, our obligation to love him with all our hearts, and be wholly the Lord's, is yet infinitely more increased, if we consider what ways the Lord has taken with us in this apostate world, since our rebellion against him; since we have lost all esteem for him, turned enemies to him, cast off his authority, and practically bid defiance to his power and justice; for, instead of immediately dooming all this lower world to blackness of darkness forever, he has sent his Son, his only-begotten Son, from heaven, to bring us the news of pardon and peace, and, by his own death, to open a way for our return unto him, and to call and invite us to return. And now, with a liberal hand, he strews common mercies all round the world, among evil, unthankful, guilty, hell-deserving rebels, and fills the hearts of all with food and gladness; and sends forth his

messengers to proclaim it to the ends of the earth, that it is his will that all his rebellious creatures lay down their weapons of rebellion, acknowledge the law, by which they stand condemned, to be holy, just, and good, and look to him through Jesus Christ for pardon as a free gift, and through Jesus Christ return unto him, and give up themselves to him entirely to love him, and live to him, and delight in him forever.

And while the world in general make light of all this, and go to their farms, and to their merchandise, and many are enraged and cry out against the messengers of peace, and stone some and kill others, — that now he should, of his own sovereign good pleasure, according to his eternal purpose, seize here and there one, by his all-conquering grace, and stop them in their career to hell, and make them see and feel their sin and guilt, and own the sentence just by which they stand condemned, and bring them as upon their knees to look to free grace through Jesus Christ for a pardon, and through Jesus Christ to give up themselves forever to him — that now he should receive them to favor, and put them among his children, and become their Father and their God, in an everlasting covenant, and undertake to teach and lead; to quicken and strengthen; to correct and comfort; and so to humble, and purify, and sanctify, and fit them for his heavenly kingdom; and, while they are in this world, to give them all things that are best for them, and make all things work together for their good, and finally bring them unto, and possess them of eternal glory and blessedness, in the full enjoyment of himself forever — for a God of infinite greatness and glory to deal just so, with just such creatures, is the most amazing and astonishing grace; and lays infinite bonds upon believers to love the Lord their God with all their hearts, and to live to him forever, and has the greatest tendency to animate them so to do. And thus, by these brief hints, we have a general view of the additional motives of a true and genuine love to God.

As God's bringing up the children of Israel out of Egypt; leading them through the wilderness; driving out the heathen from before them, and giving them that good land which floweth with milk and honey; and covenanting to be their God, is used so frequently by Moses and the prophets, throughout all the Old Testament, as a motive to engage them to cleave to the Lord, and to him only, and entirely, and forever; so God's sending his Son into the world, to save his people from their sins, their spiritual bondage, together with all the spiritual and everlasting blessings of the covenant of grace, are continually used in the New Testament, as arguments to

engage believers not to live to themselves, but to him that died for them. Only here let these things be remembered:

(1.) That a sight and sense of the infinite greatness and glory of God, from whom all good comes, and a sense of their own infinite meanness and unworthiness, makes all the mercies they receive infinitely the more endearing and engaging. For the mercies themselves now appear unspeakably the greater, in that they come from such a God, and to such creatures; and the infinite goodness of God shines the brighter in every mercy, and the freeness of his grace is the more conspicuous, on account of which he is infinitely amiable. The infinite greatness and glory of God, in general, ravishes the heart; the infinite moral beauty of the divine goodness and grace, in particular, ravishes the heart; and now, that such a God should show such kindnesses to such a creature, is very affecting. "Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" says holy David. "And is this the manner of men, O Lord God?" No, surely. "Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee." God is loved for the kindnesses bestowed; but he is more loved for the infinite beauty of that goodness which is displayed in the bestowment of them, and for his being altogether such a one as he is. So the queen of Sheba esteemed Solomon for the kindnesses he showed her, but primarily, and much more, for his own personal excellencies. And his personal excellencies made her esteem his favors to her of much greater worth. That a glorious and ever-blessed God should treat sinners so, is infinitely endearing. Now, these sensations, which a true believer has, and his love to God arising therefrom, must be vastly different from every thing which natural men experience, who know not God, and have no higher principle in them than self-love.

(2.) Let it also be remembered, that God designs, by all his dealings and kindnesses to his people, to bring them nearer to himself in this world, and to the everlasting enjoyment of himself in the world to come. He means, for the present, to humble them, and wean them from the world; to make them more spiritually and heavenly minded; to bring them to be more acquainted with God, and more entirely to take up their rest and contentment in him; and, therefore, all things are calculated, by his infinite wisdom and goodness, to attain this end. And this causes all the wise and kind dealings of God, outwardly in his providence, and inwardly by his Spirit, and that both by way of correction, as well as by way of con-

solation, to appear in a very affecting and engaging light to true believers. While they see what God is in himself, and his infinite beauty in being such; while they see how infinitely sufficient he is to be all things to them, and to do all things for them, and the blessedness of living wholly upon him, and trusting wholly in him; while they see God calculating all things to bring them to him, and actually find all things working this way, their obligations to love him and live to him appear infinitely binding, and their hearts are mightily engaged and animated. This view of things makes all their afflictions appear as great mercies; because they are so wisely calculated to bring them near to God. (Psalm cxix. 71.) This view of things adds an infinite value to all the kindnesses of God, over and above what they are worth merely in themselves, because they are all so wisely calculated to bring them near to God. This is the kernel of all that tender mercy and loving-kindness which they see in all their afflictions, and in all their comforts. (Heb. xii. 10, 11. Rom. viii. 28.) To be brought near to God, is worth more than all the world; there is no portion like God, no comfort like that which is to be taken in him; he is the godly man's all. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing on earth I desire besides thee." And now that such a God should take such methods with just such a creature, to bring him to the possession of such a good, is the most amazing goodness and the most astonishing grace. Now, here is a sense of the excellency of the divine nature in general, and a sense of the moral beauty of the divine goodness in particular, and of the unspeakable mercy God shows to them, which mercy is infinitely magnified in their account, from the value they have for God, as the portion of their souls, from all which their love to God takes its rise; whereby their love appears to be exceedingly different from any thing which natural men experience, who neither know God, nor relish communion with him, but are contrary to him in all things; and, only from self-love, are glad of the good things they receive from God, which good things they live upon and make a god of; whether they be worldly good things, or great light, and comfort, and joy of a religious nature.

(3.) Let it also be remembered, that all God's gifts to his people are so many talents bestowed upon them, ultimately to be improved for God, whereby they are put under advantages to glorify God and do good in the world. And the more they have of worldly substance, of natural powers, of acquired accomplishments, and of the gracious influences of

the Holy Spirit, the greater are their advantages to act for God, to promote his honor and interest, and to do good. Now, in proportion as they love God, in the same proportion is his honor and interest, and the good and welfare of his creatures and subjects, dear unto them. The interest and honor of God lie nearer to the hearts of his people, than their parents, or consorts, or children, or houses and lands; yea, than their own lives. To be under advantages, therefore, to promote his honor and interest, must, in their account, be esteemed an inestimable privilege. Hence they love God for all things they receive from him, because by all they are put under such advantages to live to him, and serve him, seeking his interest, and honor, and glory — a remarkable instance of which we have in Ezra, that hearty friend to God, and to his honor and interest. (Ezra vii. 27, 28, compared with the rest of the chapter.) Now, herein, again, their love to God for his benefits is evidently different from any thing which natural men experience, who have no higher principle than self-love, and are entirely actuated by it.

And as the love of the saint and of the hypocrite thus greatly differ in their nature, so do they also differ as greatly in their fruits and effects. Ezra loved God greatly for his kindnesses to him, because thereby he was put under advantages to do so much for God's glory, and for the good of his people. And now see how active he is for God, and how he exerts himself to do good, and to reform every thing that was amiss among the Jews, from the eighth chapter and on; while the hypocritical Jews, who, no doubt, were also greatly affected with the mercy of God, in their deliverance from their long captivity, were so far from being active for God, that they, not caring for his honor or his laws, committed great abominations. (Ezra ix. 1.) So the children of Israel, at the Red Sea, seemed to be full of love to God, as well as Moses; but as they had different sorts of love, so their carriage did as greatly differ afterwards, for the course of forty years; and no wonder, for the hypocritical Israelites only loved themselves, and cared only for their own interest; but Moses loved God, and cared, above all things, for his honor.

Thus we see, not only what additional obligations believers are under to love God with all their hearts, but also how, and in what manner, they influence and excite them so to do. And what I have offered effectually obviates the common plea of formalists and all self-seekers, that all the saints in Scripture are represented as loving God for his benefits; whence they argue, that they are right, and their religion genuine, which

results merely from self-love, and the fear of hell, and hope of heaven, or from a confident persuasion that their sins are pardoned. For it is evident, that true saints do not love God for his benefits, nor eye their own happiness, in the same manner that such men do; but in a manner altogether different. Saints know the God they love, and love him primarily, for what he is in himself, and because he is just what he is. But hypocrites know not God, nor love him; but are, in all things, contrary to him, and are only pleased with the false image of God they have framed in their fancies, merely because they think that he loves them, and has done, and will do, great things for them. Saints are affected with the divine goodness itself, for the moral beauty there is in it; but hypocrites are affected only with the fruits and effects of divine goodness to them, as tending to make them happy. Saints love God for his benefits, under a real sense of their infinite unworthiness of the least of them; but so it is not with hypocrites. Saints love God for all the streams of divine goodness, because they are designed, and actually do lead them up to God, the fountain, who is the portion of their souls; but hypocrites live upon the streams, disrelishing the fountain. Saints love God dearly for all his gifts, because by them they are put under such advantages to live to God, to promote his interest and honor, and to do good in the world; but hypocrites are confined within the narrow circle, self. The love of saints to God animates them to live to God, and to exert themselves to promote his honor and interest, and to do all the good they can; but the hypocrite, after all his pretended love to God, cares not what becomes of his interest and honor, if it may but go well with him, his friends, and party. So that, while true saints love God for his benefits, they act, in a gracious manner, conformable to the law of God, and to the reason and nature of things; whereas, all the love of the most refined hypocrite is merely the workings of a natural self-love, in a manner directly contrary to the law of God, and to the reason and nature of things; and is nothing but mere mockery. (Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35, 36, 37. Zech. vii. 5, 6.)

Thus we have gone through the two first general heads, and seen what is implied in love to God, and from what motives we ought to love him. And, from the whole, we may learn so much of the nature of true religion, as that, with much evidence and certainty, we may conclude,

First. That *all that seeming love to God is counterfeit, which arises merely from men's corruptions being gratified.* As when ambitious men are, by God's providence, raised to high degrees

of honor, and worldly men are prospered in all which they put their hands unto, and herefrom the one and the other rejoice and bless God, and seem to love him, and verily think they are sincere. This is all hypocrisy; for, in truth, they only love their corruptions, and are glad they are gratified. And, accordingly, instead of improving all their riches and honor for God, to advance his interest and honor in the world, they improve all only for themselves, to promote their own ends; and care not what becomes of God's honor, and interest, and kingdom; and commonly such men show themselves the greatest enemies to the cause of God, and to the religion of Christ; and should God but touch all they have, they would curse him to his face.

Secondly. We may be equally certain, that *all that seeming love to God is counterfeit, that arises merely from a legal, self-righteous spirit.* As when a man, only because he is afraid of hell, and has a mind to be saved, sets himself to repent, and reform, and do duties, and tries to love God and aim at his glory, to the intent that he may make some amends for past sins, and recommend himself to the divine favor, and so escape hell and obtain heaven. And when he has grown so good, as to have raised hopes of attaining his end, he is ravished at the thoughts, and rejoices, and blesses the Lord, and loves him. It is plain all this is hypocrisy; for the man, in truth, only loves himself, and is concerned merely for his own interest; but does not care at all for God, his glory, or honor; for, if there were no heaven nor hell, such would serve God no more. Children will work for their parents, without being hired, because they love them; but hirelings will not strike a stroke if there is no money to be gotten; because they care for nothing but their own interest. Hence this sort of hypocrites are wont to say, that if they once believed that God had made no promises to the best they can do, they would never do more. And further, it is plainly all hypocrisy; for, if their consciences but fall asleep, so that they are troubled no more with the thoughts of another world, they will leave off their duties, let down their watch, break all their resolutions, and be as bad as ever; and hence their doctrine of falling from grace probably took its rise. And their hypocrisy is still more evident, in that they are commonly so much concerned to find out what the least measure of saving grace is, and so strenuous in pleading for great abatements in the law; for, from hence, it is plain, that all they are after is only to get just grace enough to carry them to heaven; as a lazy hireling, who is for doing but only just work enough to pass for a day's work, that he may get his wages at night, which is all he wants.

Thirdly. We may be as certain, that *all that seeming love is counterfeit, which arises merely from a strong confidence which a man has that his sins are pardoned, and that Christ loves him and will save him.* As when a man is under great terrors, and has fearful apprehensions of hell and damnation, and is ready even to give himself up for lost; but suddenly great light breaks into his mind; he sees Christ with his arms open and smiling, and it may be his blood running, and hears him, as it were, say, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee; I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Come, thou blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom;" and now he is certain that his sins are pardoned, and that heaven is his, and he is even ravished with joy, and calls upon all to praise the Lord. For all this proceeds merely from self-love, and there is no love to God in it; for all this love arises from his false confidence, and not from any true knowledge of God; and commonly such turn out as the Israelites did who sang God's praise at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh and his host were drowned, and they delivered, and their hopes of getting to Canaan highly raised; but they soon forgat his works, and rebelled against him, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness. They loved themselves, and therefore they rejoiced at their wonderful deliverance; they loved themselves, and therefore they murmured three days after, when they came to the bitter waters. Their joys and their murmurings proceeded from the very same principle, under different circumstances; but the love of God was not in them: and just this is the case here. And this is commonly the event, that, the fears of hell being now over, their joys gradually abate, and they grow more and more secure, till, after a while, they return to folly, as the dog to his vomit, and as the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; and so are as bad, and sometimes worse than ever. (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22.) And now they plead that the best are dead sometimes, and that David and Peter had their falls; and so keep their consciences as quiet as they can; and thus they live along whole months and years together.

Fourthly, and lastly. We may also be certain, that *all that seeming love to God, which arises merely from the gratification of spiritual pride, is counterfeit.* As when men dream dreams, see visions, and hear voices, and have impressions and revelations whereby they are set up in their own esteem, and in the opinion of others, for some of the most peculiar favorites of Heaven, and very best men in all the world; and hence they rejoice, and bless God, and mightily love him: but, in truth, they

are only ravished with self-conceit, and feel blessedly to think themselves some of the best men in the world, and to think they shall shortly sit at the right hand of Christ in heaven, among the apostles and martyrs, while their persecutors and haters will be burning in hell: but they neither know God nor love him; and for the most part, by heretical doctrines, or wicked lives, or both, are a scandal to religion. These are so far from being truly religious, that they are the very tares which the devil sows.

In each of these sorts of love there are these three defects or faults: First, they have no true knowledge of God; and so, secondly, they only love themselves; and, thirdly, their seeming love to God arises from a mistake. The ambitious and worldly man thinks himself very happy because he rises in honor and estate; the legalist thinks that God loves him, and will save him for his duties; the next firmly believes that his sins are pardoned; and the last, that God looks upon him as one of the best men in the world: but all are wofully mistaken; and when, at the day of judgment, they come to see their mistake, their love to God will vanish away, and they turn everlasting haters and blasphemers of the Most High. And another defect in these and all other sorts of counterfeit love, is, that they none of them will ever make men truly obedient: for when men's seeming to love God is nothing but self-love in another shape, all their seeming obedience will, in reality, be nothing but self-seeking. They may pretend to be servants of God, but will only mean, ultimately, to serve themselves.

SECTION III.

CONCERNING THE MEASURE OF LOVE TO GOD REQUIRED IN THE DIVINE LAW.

I PROCEED now to the next thing proposed, which was,

To show what is that measure of love to God, which the law requires of all mankind. And our blessed Savior clears up this point in the most plain and familiar language: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" and it is added, "with all thy strength;" that is, in other words, we ought to love God in a measure exactly proportionable to the largeness of our

natural powers and faculties; which to do, is all that perfection which God ever required of any of his creatures.*

When the law requires us to love God with all our hearts, it either means, to the utmost extent of our natural capacity, or else only to the utmost extent of our moral capacity; that is, only so much as we are inclined to. And then the less we are inclined to love God, the less love is required; and so if we have no heart, no inclination to love him, then no love at all is required. And according to this rule, the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, is not in duty bound to be subject to the law, neither indeed can be; and where there is no law, there is no transgression; where there is no duty required, there can be no sin committed; and so the vilest of mortals are the freest from sin, and the least to blame; which is the grossest absurdity. When, therefore, the law requires us to love God with all our hearts, it has no reference to our moral inclination, but only to our natural capacity. And indeed nothing can be more unreasonable, than to suppose that the law only requires us to love God so far as we have a heart and disposition to do so; for this would leave us entirely at liberty to do otherwise, if we were so inclined, and, in effect, it would make the law say, If you feel inclined to love God, more or less, so far it is your duty, but further you are not bound, but are at your liberty; that is, the law is not binding, any further than you are inclined to obey it; that is, in reality it is no law, but every man is left to do as he pleases. The whole heart, therefore, does the law mean to require, let our temper, inclination, or disposition, be what it will.

God, the great author of all things, has been pleased to create intelligent beings of different sizes, some of a higher rank, and some of a lower; some of greater capacities, and some of less; some are angels, and some are men; and among the angels,

* The law runs thus: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, etc., and thy neighbor *as* thyself." God is to have the highest degree of love we are capable of: but a much less degree is due to ourselves and neighbors; so that, according to the tenor of the law, our love to God is to be greater and more fervent than our love to ourselves. And therefore the law does suppose that God is worthy of our supreme love for what he is in himself, antecedent to any selfish consideration, from a sight and sense of which worthiness our love to God is primarily to take its rise: for in the nature of things, it would be impossible for us, from self-love, to love God more than ourselves; or thus, the law requires us to love God more than ourselves; but, in the nature of things, it is impossible that merely from self-love we should love God more than ourselves: therefore the law supposes that there is something in God to excite our love, antecedent to any selfish consideration, and that our love to him is not to proceed merely from self-love: for, otherwise, the law requires us to do that which in its own nature is absolutely impossible. And this, by the way, may serve still further to confirm the truth of what has been before said.

some are of larger natural powers, and some of smaller. So it is among the good angels, and so it is among the evil angels. There are angels and archangels, that is, beings of various natural powers and capacities, among the good and bad. And so it is among men; among good and bad, there is a very great variety; some have larger souls than others.

Intelligent beings are capable of a degree of knowledge and love exactly proportionable to their natural powers. Angels are capable of a degree of knowledge and love greater than men, and one man of a greater degree than another. As they are of different sizes, of larger and smaller natural powers, so their capacities to know and love are some greater, and some less. So it is among good and bad.

All that perfection which God requires of any of his creatures, is a measure of knowledge and love bearing an exact proportion to their natural abilities. Since God has manifested what he is, in his works and ways, and since he is infinitely glorious in being what he is, and has an original and entire right to his intelligent creatures, therefore he requires all angels and men to attend diligently to the discoveries which he has made of himself, and learn what he is, and behold his glory, and love him with all their hearts. This is the extent of what God requires of the highest angel in heaven, and this is exactly what he requires of all the children of men upon earth.

The law requires no more than this of mankind, under a notion that their natural powers are lessened by the fall. Whether we are beings of as large natural powers as we should have been, had we never apostatized from God, or no, yet this is plain, we are nowhere in Scripture blamed for having no larger natural powers, nor is any more ever required than all the heart, and all the soul, and all the mind, and all the strength. This is evident through the whole Bible.

And the law requires no less of mankind, under a notion that they are turned enemies to God, and have no heart or inclination to love him. Be it so, that mankind are ever so averse to attend to those manifestations which God has made of himself, and ever so averse to take in right notions of God, and ever so far from a disposition to account him infinitely glorious in being what he is, and from an inclination to love him with all their hearts; yet the divine law makes no allowances, no abatements, but insists upon the same — the very same it ever did: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

Indeed, some do dream that the law is very much abated. But what saith the Scripture as to this point? Does the word of God teach us that there is any abatement made? Where do

we read it? Where is it plainly asserted, or in what texts is it implied? Truly, I know nothing like it in all the Bible, nor what texts of Scripture this notion can be built upon. And besides, if the law is abated, when was it abated? Was it abated immediately upon Adam's fall? Surely no; for, above two thousand years after, from Mount Sinai, God declared that he required sinless perfection, and threatened a curse against the man that should fail in the least point. (Exod. xx. Deut. xxvii. 26.) Was it abated upon Christ's coming into the world? Surely no; for he, in the strongest terms, taught his disciples that it was in full force, and that it was their duty to be perfectly holy, and that in designed opposition to the doctrine of the Pharisees, who, in effect, held that the law was abated. (Matt. v. 17—48.) Was it abated after Christ's death and resurrection? Surely no; for St. Paul always taught that the Christian scheme of religion which he preached, did not make void, but rather established the law. And St. James insisted upon it, that it must not be broken in any one point. When was it abated, therefore? Why, says Christ, "Till heaven and earth shall pass away, one jot or tittle of the law shall in no wise fail." And besides, if the law is abated, in what particular is it abated, and how great are the abatements? Are there any abatements made in our duty to God? Surely no; for we are still required to love him with all our hearts, and more than this never was demanded. Or are any abatements made in our duty to our fellow-men? Surely no; for we are still required to love our neighbor as ourselves, and more than this never was enjoined. Or is there any abatement made in the internal part of our duty? Surely no; for the whole heart is still required, and more than this never was insisted upon. Or, finally, is there any abatement made in the external part of our duty? Surely no; for we are still required to be "holy in all manner of conversation, as he that has called us is holy"—and more than this was never required. So that, from the whole, we have as much reason to think that the law requires sinless perfection now, as that ever it did: yea, this point cannot be plainer than it is; for the law, in fact, is the very same it was from the beginning, word for word, without the least alteration: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, etc., and thy neighbor as thyself;" so that, if it ever did require sinless perfection, it does now.

The highest pitch of holiness the saints in heaven will ever arrive to, will only be to love God with all their hearts; and exactly the very same is required of every man upon earth. And it was because St. Paul understood the law in this sense,

that he had always such a mean and low opinion of all his attainments; for while he compared what he was with what he ought to be, he plainly saw how the case stood; and therefore he says, "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. O wretched man that I am!"

So that, upon the whole, this seems to be the true state of the case: as there are various capacities among all intelligent creatures in general, so there are among men in particular, souls of various sizes; some of larger natural capacities, and some of smaller; but souls of different capacities are capable of different degrees of love. A degree of love exactly equal to the natural capacity of the soul, is perfection; and this is what the law requires, nor more nor less; all the heart, all the soul, all the mind, all the strength. The saints and angels in heaven love God thus, and hence they are perfect in holiness; and, so far as we fall short of this, we are sinful.

This is the exact rule of duty. And now, this law is holy, just, and good. The thing required is, in its own nature, right, fit, and suitable. God is worthy to be loved with all our hearts, and this is just what is required. It is right we should have a degree of love to ourselves, and it is right we should love our neighbors as ourselves; but it is fit we should love God with all our hearts. Considering what he is, and what we are, it is, in its own nature, infinitely fit and right; and not to do so, infinitely unfit and wrong. Indeed, God is worthy of an infinitely greater degree of love than we, or any of his creatures, are capable of. He only is capable of a complete view of his own infinite glory, and of a full sense of his own infinite beauty, and of a love perfectly adequate to his own loveliness; and he does not require or expect any of his creatures to love him to that degree he loves himself; only, as he loves himself with all his heart, so he requires and expects that they love him with all their hearts. And there being the same reason for one as for the other, the law is, therefore, in its own nature, perfectly right, and just, and equal. Indeed, had God required the most exalted of his intelligent creatures to have loved him in the same degree that he himself does, then the thing required, would, in its own nature, have been absolutely impossible, and what he could have no reason to expect; or, if he had required the meanest of his intelligent creatures to have loved him in the same degree that Gabriel does, it would have been a thing naturally impossible; but now he only requires every one to love him with all their hearts: this is right,—perfectly right, just, and equal. Less than this could not in justice have been required of each one; in justice, I mean, to the Deity, who ought to

have his due from each one, and whose proper right the Governor of the world ought to assert and maintain.

Thus we see the law is exactly upon a level with our natural capacities; it only requires us to love God with all our hearts; and thus we see that the law is therefore perfectly reasonable, just, and equal. "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul?"

Hence, as to a natural capacity, all mankind are capable of a perfect conformity to this law; for the law requires of no man any more than to love God with all his heart. The sinning angels have the same natural capacities now, as they had before they fell; they have the same faculties, called the understanding and will; they are still the same beings, as to their natural powers. Once they loved God with all their hearts; and now they hate him with all their hearts. Once they had a great degree of love; now they have as great a degree of hatred; so that they have the same natural capacities now as ever. Their temper, indeed, is different; but their capacity is the same; and, therefore, as to a natural capacity, they are as capable of a perfect conformity to the law of their Creator as ever they were. So Adam, after his fall, had the same soul that he had before, as to its natural capacities, though of a very different temper; and, therefore, in that respect, was as capable of a perfect conformity to this law as ever. And it is plainly the case, that all mankind, as to their natural capacities, are capable of a perfect conformity to the law, from this, that when sinners are converted they have no new natural faculties, though they have a new temper; and when they come to love God with all their hearts in heaven, still they will have the same hearts, as to their natural faculties, and may, in this respect, be justly looked upon as the very same beings. In this sense, Paul was the same man when he hated and persecuted Christ, as when he loved him and died for him; and that same heart that was once so full of malice, is now as full of love. So that, as to his natural capacities, he was as capable of a perfect conformity to this law, when he was a persecutor, as he is now in heaven. When, therefore, men cry out against the holy law of God, which requires us only to love him with all our hearts, and say, "It is not just for God to require more than we can do, and then threaten to damn us for not doing," they ought to stay a while, and consider what they say, and tell what they mean by their *can do;* for it is plain that the law is exactly upon a level with our natural capacities, and that, in this respect, we are fully

capable of a perfect conformity thereto. And it will be impossible for us to excuse ourselves by an inability arising from any other quarter; as will presently appear. For to return:

From what has been said, we may learn, that there can be nothing to render it, in any measure, a hard and difficult thing to love God with all our hearts, but our being destitute of a right temper of mind, and having a temper that is wrong; and that, therefore, we are perfectly inexcusable, and altogether and wholly to blame, that we do not.

Obj. But I do not know God; how, therefore, can I love him?

Ans. Were you of a right temper, it would be your nature, above all things, to attend to those discoveries which he has made of himself in his works and in his word; you would search for the knowledge of him, as men search for silver, and as they dig for hidden treasure; and, were you of a right temper, it would be natural to take in that very representation which God has made of himself. And now, was it but your nature to attend, with all your heart, to the discoveries which God has made of himself, and your nature to take in right notions of him, it would be impossible but that you should know what God is; because he has acted out all his perfections so much to the life, and exhibited such an exact image of himself. The works of creation and redemption, and all his conduct as moral Governor of the world, show just what kind of being he is. He has discovered his infinite understanding and almighty power, and he has shown the temper of his heart; and all in so plain a manner, that, were it your nature to attend and consider, and take in right notions, it is quite impossible but that you should know and see plainly what God is.

Obj. But if I have right notions of what God is, yet I cannot see his glory and beauty in being such; how, therefore, can I love him?

Ans. Were you of a right temper, it would be your nature to account him infinitely glorious in being what he is. As it is the nature of an ambitious man to see a glory in applause, and of a worldly man to see a glory in the things of the world, so it would be your nature to see a glory in God; for what suits our hearts naturally appears excellent in our eyes. (John viii. 42, 47.)

Obj. But I feel that I cannot love him: how, therefore, am I wholly to blame?

Ans. The fault is in him, or in you — either he is not lovely, or else you are of a very bad temper. But he is infinitely lovely; and therefore it is only owing to the bad temper of

your heart, and to your being destitute of a right temper, that you cannot love him; and you, therefore, are wholly to blame. Indeed, you could not but love him, were you not a very sordid wretch.

Obj. But to love God, or to have any disposition to love him, is a thing supernatural, clean beyond the powers of nature, improved to the utmost: how can I, therefore, be wholly to blame?

Ans. It is a thing supernatural, you say; that is, in other words, you have no heart to it, nor the least inclination that way; nor is there any thing in your temper to work upon by motives to bring you to it; and now, because you are so very bad a creature, therefore you are not at all to blame. This is your argument. But can you think that there is any force in it? What! are moral agents the less to blame the worse they grow? And are God's laws no longer binding than while his subjects are disposed to obey them?

Obj. But, after all, I must needs reply, as Nicodemus in another case, "How can these things be?"

Ans. Why did not the Jews love their prophets, and love Christ and his apostles? What was it owing to? And where did the blame lie? They were acquainted with them; heard them talk and preach, and saw their conduct, and could not but plainly perceive their temper, and know what sort of disposition they were of, and what sort of men they were; and yet they did not like them; but they hated them; they belied them, slandered and reproached them, and put them to death. And now what was the matter? What was the cause of all this? Were not their prophets, and Christ and his apostles, indeed lovely, and worthy of their hearty esteem? Did not all that they said and did manifest them to be so? Why, then, did they not love them? Was it not wholly owing to their not having a right temper of mind, and to their being of so bad a disposition? And were they not wholly to blame? They might say of Christ, that they could see no form nor comeliness in him, wherefore they should desire him; and where no beauty is seen, it is impossible there should be any love. But why did not he appear most amiable in their eyes? And why were their hearts not ravished with his beauty? His disciples loved him, and Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus loved him; and why did not the Scribes and Pharisees love him as much? Why, because his person and doctrines did not suit them, and were not agreeable to the temper of their hearts. The bad temper of their hearts made him appear odious in their eyes, and was the cause of all their ill-will towards him. And now, were

they not to blame for this bad temper, and for all their bad feelings, and bad carriage towards Christ, thence arising? Yes, surely, if ever any men were to blame for any thing. And now, if God the Father had been in the same circumstances as God the Son was then in, he would not have been loved a jot more, or treated a whit better, than he was. Indeed, it was that image and resemblance of the infinitely glorious and blessed God, which was to be seen in their prophets, in Christ and his apostles, which was the very thing they hated him for. Therefore Christ says, "He that hateth me hateth my Father also. But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." And Christ attributes it entirely to their want of a right temper, and to the bad disposition of their hearts, that they did not love him, and love his doctrines. "If God were your Father, you would love me." "He that is of God," — of a godlike temper, — "heareth God's words: ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God." In truth, the bottom of all your enmity is, that "you are of your father, the devil," that is, of just such a temper as he. And now, what think you, when Christ comes in flaming fire, to take vengeance on an ungodly world? Will he blame the Scribes and Pharisees for not loving him with all their hearts, or no? Or will he excuse the matter, and say, on their behalf, "They could see no form nor comeliness in me. I appeared very odious to them; they could not love me; they could not but hate me, and no man is to blame for not doing more than he can?"

From the whole, it is plain that mankind are to blame, wholly to blame, and perfectly inexcusable, for their not having right apprehensions of God, and for their not having a sense of his glory in being what he is, and for their not loving him with all their heart; because all is owing merely to their want of a right temper, and to the bad disposition of their hearts.

Indeed, if we were altogether of such a temper, frame, and disposition of heart as we ought to be, it would be altogether as easy and natural to love God with all our hearts, as it is for the most dutiful child to love a tender and valuable parent. For God is really infinitely amiable; and were we of such a temper, he would appear so in our eyes; and did he appear so in our eyes, we could not but love him with all our hearts, and delight in him with all our souls; and it would be most easy and natural so to do; for no man ever found any difficulty in loving that which appears very amiable in his eyes; for the proof of which I appeal to the experience of all mankind.

And now, why does not God appear infinitely amiable in our eyes? Is it because he has not clearly revealed what he is, in his works and in his word? Surely no; for the revelation is plain enough. Is it because he is not infinitely amiable in being what he is? Surely no; for all heaven are ravished with his infinite beauty. What is it, then, that makes us blind to the infinite excellency of the divine nature? Why, it can be owing to nothing but a bad temper of mind in us, and to our not being of such a temper as we ought to be. For I appeal to the experience of all mankind, whether those persons and things which suit the temper of their hearts, do not naturally appear amiable in their eyes? And certainly, if God does not suit the temper of our hearts, it is not owing to any fault in him, but the fault must be wholly in ourselves. If the temper and disposition of God — that is, his moral perfections — be not agreeable to our temper and disposition, most certainly our temper and disposition are very wrong. "If God were your father, ye would love me; but ye are of your father the devil; therefore ye hate me;" that is, if you were of a temper like God, you would love me; but being of a contrary temper, hence you hate me. If you were of a right temper, I should appear amiable unto you; and it is wholly owing to your bad temper, that I appear otherwise. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

Obj. But be it so, yet I cannot help being of such a temper as I am of: how, therefore am I wholly to blame?

Ans. You have as much power to help being of such a temper as the Scribes and Pharisees had; but Christ judged them to be wholly to blame, and altogether inexcusable. They could not like Christ or his doctrine: ye cannot hear my word, says Christ; but their *cannot*, their inability, was no excuse to them in Christ's account, because all their inability, he plainly saw, arose from their bad temper, and their want of a good disposition. And although they had no more power to help being of such a temper than you have, yet he judged them wholly to blame, and altogether inexcusable. (John viii. 33—47; xv. 22—25.) And now we know that his judgment is according to truth. But in order to help you to see into the reason of the thing, I desire you seriously and impartially to consider, —

1. That sinners are free and voluntary in their bad temper. A wicked world have discovered a very strong disposition to hate God, even from the beginning. And the Jewish nation, God's own peculiar people, of whom, if of any, we might hope for better things, were so averse to God and his ways, that

they hated and murdered the messengers which he sent to reclaim them, and, at last, even murdered God's own Son. And now, whence was all this? Why, from the exceeding bad and wicked temper of their hearts. "They have hated me without a cause." But did any body force them to be of such a bad temper? Surely no; they were hearty in it. Were they of such a bad temper against their wills? Surely no; their wills, their hearts were in it. Yea, they loved their bad temper, and loved to gratify it, and hence were mightily pleased with their false prophets, because they always prophesied in their favor, and suited and gratified their disposition: and they hated whatsoever was disagreeable to their bad temper, and tended to cross it; and hence were they so enraged at the preaching and the persons of their prophets, of Christ and his apostles; so that they were manifestly voluntary and hearty in their bad temper. "We have loved strangers, and after them we *will* go." "But as for the word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we *will not* hearken unto thee." "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets." And so all wicked men are as voluntary in their bad temper as they were. The temper of the mind is nothing but the habitual inclination of the heart; but an involuntary inclination of the heart is a contradiction. And the stronger any inclination is, the more full and free the heart and soul is in the thing. Hence the bad temper, or the habitual bad inclination of the devil, is at the farthest distance from any compulsion; he is most perfectly free and hearty in it. And all sinful creatures being thus voluntary, free, and hearty in the bad temper of their minds,—or, in other words, the bad temper of the mind being nothing but the habitual inclination of the heart,—hence all must be to blame in a degree equal to the strength of their bad inclination. In a word, if we were continually forced to be of such a bad temper entirely against our wills, then we should not be to blame; for it would not be at all the temper of our hearts: but so long as our bad temper is nothing else but the habitual frame, disposition, and inclination of our own hearts, without any manner of compulsion, we are perfectly without excuse, and that whether we can help being of such a temper, or no. For,

2. If a sinful creature's not being able to help his being of a bad temper does in the least free him from blame, then the more

vile and sinful any creature grows, the less to blame will he be: because the more vile and sinful any creature grows, the less able is he to help his being of so bad a frame of heart. Thus, if a man feels a bad spirit towards one of his neighbors creeping into his heart, perhaps, if he immediately resists it, he may be able easily to overcome and suppress it; but if he gives way to it, and suffers it to take strong hold of his heart, if he cherishes it until it grows up into a settled enmity, and keeps it in his heart for twenty years, seeking all opportunities to gratify it by backbiting, defaming, etc., it will now, perhaps, be clean out of his power to get rid of it, and effectually root it out of his heart. It will at least be a very difficult thing. Now, the man is talked to and blamed for backbiting and defaming his neighbor, time after time, and is urged to love his neighbor as himself; but he says he cannot love him. But why cannot you? For other men love him. "Why, he appears in my eyes the most odious and hateful man in the world." Yes, but that is owing to your own bad temper. "Well, but I cannot help my temper, and therefore I am not to blame." Now, it is plain, in this case, how weak the man's plea is; and even common sense will teach all mankind to judge him the more vile and blameworthy, by how much the more his grudge is settled and rooted. And yet the more settled and rooted it is, the more unable is he to get rid of it. And just so it is here. Suppose a creature loved God with all his heart, but after a while begins to feel his love abate, and an aversion to God secretly creeping into his soul; now, perhaps, he might easily suppress and overcome it: but if he gives way to it, until he loses all sense of God's glory, and settles into a state of enmity against him, it may be quite impossible ever to recover himself. And yet he is not the less, but the more vile, and so the more blameworthy. If, then, we are so averse to God that we cannot love him, and if our bad temper is so strong, so settled, and rooted, that we cannot get rid of it, this is so far from being matter of excuse for us, that it renders us so much the more vile, guilty, and hell-deserving; for to suppose that our inability, in this case, extenuates our fault — our inability which increases in proportion to our badness — is to suppose that the worse any sinner grows, the less to blame he is; than which nothing can be more absurd.

Obj. But I was brought into this state by Adam's fall.

Ans. Let it be by Adam's fall, or how it will, yet if you are an enemy to the infinitely glorious God, your Maker, and that voluntarily, you are infinitely to blame, and without

excuse; for nothing can make it right for a creature to be a voluntary enemy to his glorious Creator, or possibly excuse such a crime. It is, in its own nature, infinitely wrong; there is nothing, therefore, to be said; you stand guilty before God. It is in vain to make this or any other pleas, so long as we are what we are, not by compulsion, but voluntarily. And it is in vain to pretend that we are not voluntary in our corruptions, when they are nothing else but the free, spontaneous inclinations of our own hearts. Since this is the case, every mouth will be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God, sooner or later.

Thus we see, that, as to a natural capacity, all mankind are capable of a perfect conformity to God's law, which requires us only to love God with all our hearts: and that all our inability arises merely from the bad temper of our hearts, and our want of a good disposition; and that, therefore, we are wholly to blame and altogether inexcusable. Our impotency, in one word, is not natural, but moral, and, therefore, instead of extenuating, does magnify and enhance our fault. The more unable to love God we are, the more are we to blame. Even as it was with the Jews; the greater contrariety there was in their hearts to their prophets, to Christ and his apostles, the more vile and blameworthy were they.* And in this light do the Scriptures constantly view the case. There is not one tittle in the Old Testament or in the New, in the law or in the gospel, that gives the least intimation of any deficiency in our natural faculties. The law requires no more than all our hearts, and never blames us for not having larger natural capacities. The gospel aims to recover us to

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* *Obj.* But, says a secure sinner, surely there is no contrariety in my heart to God; I never hated God in my life; I always loved him.

Ans. The Scribes and Pharisees verily thought that they loved God, and that, if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have put the prophets to death. They were altogether insensible of the perfect contrariety of their hearts to the divine nature. And whence was it? Why, they had wrong notions of the divine Being, and they loved that false image which they had framed in their own fancies; and so they had wrong notions of the prophets which their fathers hated and murdered, and hence imagined that they should have loved them. But they saw a little what a temper and disposition Christ was of, and him they hated with a perfect hatred. So there are multitudes of secure sinners and self-deceived hypocrites, who verily think they love God; nevertheless, as soon as ever they open their eyes in eternity, and see just what God is, their love will vanish, and their enmity break out and exert itself to perfection. So that the reason sinners see not their contrariety to the divine nature, is their not seeing what God is. It must be so; for a sinful nature and a holy nature are diametrically opposite. So much as there is of a sinful disposition in the heart, so much of contrariety is there to the divine nature. If, therefore, we are not sensible of this contrariety, it can be owing to nothing but our ignorance of God, or not believing him to be what he really is. (Rom. viii 8. 9.)

love God only with all our hearts, but makes no provision for our having any new natural capacity; as to our natural capacities, all is well. It is in our temper, in the frame and disposition of our hearts, that the seat of all our sinfulness lies. "Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a rebellious house." This is the bottom of the business. We have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and his glory shines all around us, in the heavens and in the earth; in his word and in his ways; and his name is proclaimed in our ears; and there is nothing hinders our seeing and hearing, but that we are rebellious creatures. Our contrariety to God makes us blind to the beauty of the divine nature, and deaf to all his commands, counsels, calls, and invitations. We might know God, if we had a heart to know him; and love God, if we had a heart to love him. It is nothing but our bad temper, and being destitute of a right disposition, that makes us spiritually blind and spiritually dead. If this heart of stone was but away, and a heart of flesh was but in us, all would be well: we should be able enough to see, and hear, and understand, and know divine things; and should be ravished with their beauty; and it would be most natural and easy to love God with all our hearts.

And hence it is most evident that the supreme Governor of the world has not the least ground or reason to abate his law, or to reverse the threatening; nor have a rebellious world the least ground or reason to charge God with cruelty, and say, "It is not just that he should require more than we can do, and threaten to damn us for not doing;" for, from what has been said, it is manifest that the law is holy, just, and good; and that there is nothing in the way of our perfect conformity to it, but our own wickedness, in which we are free, and hearty, and voluntary; and for which, therefore, in strict justice, we deserve eternal damnation. The law is already exactly upon a level with our natural capacities, and it need not, therefore, be brought any lower. And there is no greater punishment threatened than our sin deserves; there is, therefore, no reason the threatening should be reversed: as to the law, all is well, and there is no need of any alteration; and there is nothing amiss, but in ourselves. It is impudent wickedness, therefore, to fly in the face of God and of his holy law, and charge him with injustice and cruelty; because, forsooth, we hate him so bad that we cannot find it in our hearts to love him; and are so high-hearted and stout that we must not be blamed. No, we are too good to be blamed in the

case, and all the blame, therefore, must be cast upon God and his holy law. Yea, we are come to that, in this rebellious world, that if God sends to us the news of pardon and peace through Jesus Christ, and invites us to return unto him and be reconciled, we are come to that, I say, as to take it as a high affront at the hands of the Almighty. "He pretends to offer us mercy," say God-hating, God-provoking sinners, "but he only mocks us; for he offers all upon conditions which we cannot possibly perform."

This is as if they should say, "We hate him so much, and are of so high a spirit, that we cannot find in our hearts to return, and own the law to be just, by which we stand condemned, and look to his free mercy, through Jesus Christ, for pardon and eternal life; and, therefore, if he will offer pardon and eternal life upon no easier terms, he does but dissemble with us, and mock and deride us in our misery." And since this is the true state of the case, therefore it is no wonder that even infinite goodness itself has fixed upon a day when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And then shall ungodly sinners be convinced of all their hard speeches which they have ungodlily spoken against the Lord; and then shall the righteousness of all God's ways be made manifest before all the world.

To conclude. God, the great Lord of all, has threatened eternal damnation against all those who do not perfectly keep the law, (Gal. iii. 10,) even although they live and die in the midst of the heathen world, (Rom. i. 18, 19, 20,) of which more afterwards. And at the day of judgment he will execute the threatening upon all, (those only excepted that are by faith interested in Christ and in the new covenant,) and his so doing will evidently be justifiable in the sight of all worlds, on this ground — that they were not under a natural necessity of sinning, but were altogether voluntary in their disobedience. "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

And this, by the way, is the very thing which stops the mouth of an awakened, convinced, humble sinner, and settles him down in it, that he deserves to be damned, notwithstanding all his doings, viz., that he is what he is, not by compulsion, or through a natural necessity, but altogether voluntarily. There is nothing more difficult in the whole work preparatory to conversion, than to make the sinner see, and feel, and own, that it is just, quite just, altogether just and fair, for God to

damn him. He pleads, that he is sorry for all his sins, and is willing to forsake them all forever, and is resolved always to do as well as he can. He pleads, that he cannot help his heart's being so bad; that he did not bring himself into that condition, but that he was brought into it by the fall of Adam, which he could not possibly prevent, and which he had no hand in. But when he comes, in a clear and realizing manner, to see and feel the whole truth, viz., that he does not care for God, nor desire to, but is really an enemy to him in his very heart, and voluntarily so, and that all his fair pretences and promises, prayers and tears, are but mere hypocrisy, arising only from self-love, and guilty fears, and mercenary hopes, now the business is done. For says he, "It matters not how I came into this condition, nor whether I can help having so bad a heart, since I am voluntarily just such a one as I am, and really love and choose to be what I am. 'Sin revived and I died.'" He feels himself without excuse, and that his mouth is stopped, and that he must be forced to own the sentence just; for he feels that it is not owing to any compulsion or natural necessity, but that he is voluntarily and heartily such a one as he is. And now, and not till now, does he feel himself to be a sinner, completely so; for he, all along before, fancied some goodness to be in him, and thought himself in some measure excusable; and now, and not till now, is he prepared to attribute his salvation entirely to free and sovereign grace. All along before, he had something to say for himself, like the Pharisee; but, with the publican, he now sees that he lies at mercy. This is the very thing that makes all mankind to blame, altogether to blame, for being what they are, namely, that they are voluntarily so; this is the reason they deserve to be damned for being so, and this, when seen and felt by the awakened sinner, effectually stops his mouth.

And this, also, is the very thing that makes believers see themselves wholly to blame for not being perfectly holy, and lays a foundation for their mourning for their want of a perfect conformity to the law. They feel their defects are not the result of a natural necessity, but only of the remains of their old aversion to God, which, so far as they are unsanctified, they are voluntary in.* And hence they cry out, "I am carnal,

* *Obj.* But does not St. Paul say, "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not"?

Ans. 'Tis true, he had a strong disposition to be perfectly holy, but his disposition was not perfect. He had a strong disposition to love God supremely, live to him entirely, and delight in him wholly, but his whole heart was not perfectly disposed to do so. There was a spirit of aversion to God, and love to sin, remaining in him. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing:" and this

sold under sin;" "O, wretched man that I am!" and set themselves down for beasts and fools.

And, finally, this want of a good temper, this voluntary and stubborn aversion to God, and love to themselves, the world, and sin, is all that renders the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit so absolutely necessary, or indeed at all needful, to recover and bring them to love God with all their hearts. A bare representation of what God is, were men of a right temper, would ravish their hearts; for his beauty and glory are infinite. It is nothing, therefore, but their badness that makes it needful that there should be line upon line, and precept upon precept. It is their aversion to God, that makes any persuasions at all needful; for, were they of a right temper, they would love God with all their hearts, of their own accord. And surely, were not men very bad indeed, there would be no occasion for his ambassadors with such earnestness to beseech them. "We pray you," says the apostle, "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." But now, that all external means that can possibly be used, all arguments, and motives, and entreaties, urged in the most forcible manner, should not be able to recover men to God, no, not one, in all the world, without the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit, can surely be attributed to nothing short of this, that an apostate world are, in very deed, at enmity against God, and their contrariety to him is mightily settled and rooted in their hearts; mightily settled and rooted indeed, that Paul was nothing, and Apollos nothing, and all their most

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was the ground and cause of all his impotency. So that when he says, "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not," he means, "To be in a measure disposed to love God supremely, live to him entirely, and delight in him wholly, is natural and easy; but how to get my whole heart into the disposition, I find not; it is beyond me, through the remains of the flesh, that is, of my native contrariety to God, and love to sin." Which remaining contrariety to God, and propensity to sin, so far as he was unsanctified, he was voluntary in; but so far as he was sanctified, he perfectly hated. "With my mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin." And so the spirit lusted against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit; and these two were contrary the one to the other, and hence he could not do the things that he would.

Obj. But does not St. Paul speak several times, in Rom. vii., as if he was not properly to blame for his remaining corruptions, when he says, "It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me"?

Ans. He only means, by that phrase, to let us know that his remaining corruption was not the governing principle in him: according to what he had said, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace;" but does not at all design to insinuate, that he did not see himself to blame, yea, wholly to blame, for his remaining corruption. For though he says sometimes, "It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me," yet, at other times, "I am carnal, sold under sin;" "O, wretched man that I am!" like a broken-hearted penitent. But he could not have mourned for his remaining corruption as being sinful, if he had not felt himself to blame for it.

vigorous efforts nothing; so that without the immediate influences of the Holy Spirit, not one, by them, although the best preachers, of mere men, that ever lived, could be persuaded to turn to God. But that the world should, in fact, rise in arms, and put the messengers of Heaven to death, seems to argue enmity and malice, to the highest degree. It is men's badness that keeps them from taking in right apprehensions of God, and that makes them blind to the beauty of the divine nature, and that makes them hate God, instead of loving him; but for this, they would love God of their own accord, without any more ado. "If God were your father," says Christ, "ye would love me; ye are of your father the devil, therefore ye hate me." Surely, then, all the world are inexcusable, and wholly to blame, for their continuance in sin, and justly deserve eternal damnation at the hands of God, as was before said. Nor is it any excuse to say, God does not give me sufficient grace to make me better; since I might love God, with all my heart, of my own accord, with all the ease in the world, if I were but of a right temper. Yea, such is his glory and beauty, that I could not but be ravished with it, were I such as I ought to be; and my needing any special grace, to make me love God, argues that I am an enemy to him, a vile, abominable wretch, not fit to live. And to pretend to excuse myself, and say I cannot, and God will not make me, is just as bad as if a rebellious child should go to his father, and say, "I hate you, and cannot love you, and God will not, by his almighty power, make me better, and therefore I am not to blame;" for the wretch could not but love his good father, were it not that he is so exceedingly vitiated in his temper. If our impotency consisted in and resulted from our want of natural capacities, if it was the business of the Holy Spirit to give us new natural faculties, then we might plead our inability, and plead God's not giving us sufficient power, in excuse for ourselves; but since all our impotency takes its rise entirely from another quarter, and all our need of the influences of the Holy Spirit to bring us to love God results from our badness, therefore are we without excuse, although God leaves us entirely to ourselves. And indeed nothing can be more absurd than to suppose the Governor of the world obliged to make his creatures love him, in spite of all their aversion; or more wicked than to lay the blame of their not loving him upon him, in case he does not. (Jer. vii. 8, 9, 10—16.)

Obj. But if it be granted that men's natural powers are adequate with the law of God, and so they, as to their natural capacities, are capable of a perfect conformity to the law; and if it be granted that the outward advantages, which all have

who live under the gospel, are sufficient, were men but of a right temper, to lead them to the true knowledge of God, and so, that all such are without excuse; yet, if any part of mankind do not enjoy sufficient outward advantages for the true knowledge of God, without which it is impossible they should either love or serve him, how can such justly and fairly be accounted altogether to blame, and wholly inexcusable? If the heathen, who have no other outward advantages whereby to gain the true knowledge of God, than the works of creation and providence, do but honestly improve what they have, shall not they be accepted, although they fall short of sinless perfection? Or is it right and fair that they should be damned?

Ans. I suppose that those advantages, which all mankind do actually enjoy, would be sufficient to lead them to a true knowledge of God, and so to love and serve him, were they of a right disposition, and were it not for the prejudices that blind and darken their minds, which arise from their enmity to God, and love to themselves, the world, and sin. (Rom. i. 20, 28.) And I suppose that God, the wise and holy, just and good Governor of the world, is under no natural obligation to use any supernatural means for the removal of those prejudices, (Rom. ix. 15;) especially considering that men love them, and are obstinate in them, and will not let them be removed if they can help it, as is, in fact, the case. (Rom. i. 18, 28. John iii. 19.) And I suppose that, since the law is holy, just, and good, nothing short of sinless perfection can, or ought to, pass with the supreme Lawgiver and Judge of the world, as a condition of acceptance. (Gal. iii. 10. Rom. iii. 20.) And I suppose that God was under no obligations to provide a Savior to bear the curse of the law, and answer its demands for any, since all are voluntarily at enmity against him and his law. (Rom. v. 8.) Upon the whole, I suppose that all mankind might have been left in their fallen state, without a Savior, or any offers of pardon and peace, or any supernatural advantages whatsoever; and that yet their natural obligations to love God with all their hearts, would have by no means ceased; and that it would have been perfectly just and right with God to have inflicted eternal damnation upon us for our not doing so. (Rom. i. 18; iii. 19.) And besides, I suppose that all the nations of the earth might have had the gospel preached to them, and, to this day, enjoyed it, had not the world been in arms against it, and killed the messengers of peace, who were sent to carry the glad tidings of pardon and salvation round the world. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) And I suppose, that still, in every age of the Christian church, there

have been ministers of Christ, who would gladly go to the farthest parts of the earth, to carry the joyful news of a Savior, were men but willing to receive the news, and repent, and convert, and return to God. I know there are such in this age; from all which, I suppose that it is right, fair, and just, for God to execute the threatening of his law according to his declared design. (Rom. ii. 5, 6.) Thus much in general; but, to be more particular, —

1. It is plain that the heathen, as well as the rest of mankind, are under a law that forbids all sin, and requires perfect holiness. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, let them be Jews or Gentiles." And since God is what he is, and they his creatures, there is the same general ground and reason that they should love him with all their hearts, as that others should. And it is plain St. Paul looked upon the heathen under obligations "to glorify God as God, and be thankful" — which is the sum of what is required in the first table of the law. And none will pretend that the heathen are not obliged to love their neighbors as themselves, and do as they would be done by; which is the sum of what the second table requires. So that it is a plain case, that they are, by the law of nature, obliged to the same perfect holiness which is required, in God's written word, of the rest of mankind.

2. It is plain St. Paul looked upon them as enjoying sufficient means of knowledge, and so to be without excuse. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Who hold the truth in unrighteousness; that is, who, instead of heartily receiving, and loving, and conforming to the truth, do, from love to their lusts, hate, and wickedly suppress, all right notions of God, of truth, and duty, stifling their consciences. But how do the Gentiles discover this aversion to the truth, who are under no advantages to know it? "I answer," says the apostle, "their advantages are sufficient; for, 'That which may be known of God is manifest in them;' that is, the perfections of God, which is all that is knowable of God, are discovered to them;" as he adds, "For God hath showed it unto them." But were not the perfections of God discovered to them so darkly as not to be sufficiently evident and perceivable? "No," says he; "for, 'The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse;' that is, ever since the creation of the world, the

perfections of God are clearly to be seen in his works, the things which he has made manifesting plainly what a God he is; so that those who see not his perfections, and are not sensible of his infinite glory, cannot plead their want of sufficient outward advantages, in excuse for their ignorance and insensibility; and therefore the heathen, who have this advantage, are without excuse."* And, still further to clear up the point, the apostle seems to go on, as it were, to say — "Yea, it is evident that the present ignorance of the Gentile nations is affected, and so inexcusable, not only from the sufficiency of their present outward advantages, but also from their former misimprovement of the advantages which they heretofore did enjoy. 'Because, when they knew God,' that is, when the heathen nations formerly had right notions of God instilled into them, being instructed in the knowledge of the true God by Noah and his sons, from whom they descended, yet then 'they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful;' their instructions had no influence upon them to make them holy: 'but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;' that is, they soon fell off to idolatry, and lost that knowledge of the true God, in which they had been instructed and educated; 'for they did not like to retain God in their knowledge;' that is, to remember those instructions which had been given them concerning the nature and perfections of God.† But they abandoned them-

* If it should be objected, that St. Paul only means that their advantages were so great as to render them inexcusable in their gross idolatry and high-handed wickedness, because they did or might have known better than to do so, it may be easily answered, from the 18th verse, that he means to prove that they were altogether inexcusable, not only in their gross sins, but also in all their ungodliness and unrighteousness, that is, plainly, in all their want of a perfect conformity to the moral law, or law of nature; for the least degree of non-conformity, in heart or life, to the first table of the law, is a degree of ungodliness; and the very least degree of non-conformity to the second table of the law, is a degree of unrighteousness. And St. Paul is express in it that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against *all* ungodliness, etc. And, in verse 21, he is full in it that the heathen are wholly inexcusable for not glorifying God as God, which is manifestly all that the law ever required; so that it is plain he does not design merely to prove that they were inexcusable in their idolatry, and the gross wickedness of their lives, but also that they were inexcusable in, and wholly to blame for, their not being perfectly holy; for they did or might have known that God deserved to be loved with all their heart, and their neighbor as themselves.

† And I may add — concerning the seed of the woman, the promised Messiah, and the way of salvation through him — for, no doubt, Noah and his sons had heard of this promise, and told it to their posterity; and if they had handed it down safe from age to age, the heathen world might, throughout all generations, have been in a salvable state: for this promise contained the sum and substance of the gospel. Methuselah lived two hundred and forty years in the days of Adam; Noah lived six hundred, and his sons about a hundred years in the days of Methuselah; and Isaac was fifty years old before all Noah's sons were dead:

selves to idolatry; 'for which cause'—for which contempt cast on God—'God gave them up' to all manner of wickedness; so that the present extreme ignorance, blindness, and wickedness of the Gentile nations, they have, through their aversion to God and love to sin, brought themselves into: so that it is manifest they do not desire the knowledge of God, but evidently hate all right notions of him, and so are, beyond dispute, 'without excuse;' which was the point to be proved." Thus he proves that they are without excuse, because their present advantages for the knowledge of God are sufficient; which advantages, ever since the creation of the world, have been common to all; and because they had once superadded advantages from parental instructions, which, instead of well improving, and of carefully handing down from generation to generation, they hated to remember, and so soon forgot.

And these passages ought to be of more weight to decide the case, because they are not merely occasional strokes, but the apostle is evidently upon the very same point that I am: for, from the 18th verse of this first chapter to the 19th verse of the third, he is industriously laboring to prove, that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and so the whole world guilty before God. And his arguments are not fetched from Adam's first sin, but from comparing them with the law of God, whereby he discovers their weaknesses; all the blame whereof he entirely lays upon them: and because it might have been objected, that the heathen world had not sufficient means of knowledge, and so were not wholly to blame and inexcusable in their non-conformity to the law, he does here designedly obviate the objection, and prove and declare them to be without any objection from that quarter. The apostle evidently takes it for granted, that they had sufficient natural powers to capacitate them for the knowledge of God, and he proves that their outward advantages were sufficient; and so he lays the whole blame of their ignorance, blindness, and wickedness upon themselves; and finally sums them up with the rest of mankind, as having their mouths stopped, and standing guilty before God.

The truth of the case seems, in a few words, to lie here—that if Adam had never fell, the works of creation and providence had been the glass in which he himself, and all his

so that this promise might easily have been handed along down by tradition, and doubtless would have been so, had it been precious in the eyes of the children of men. And afterwards, further light might have been obtained from Israel, God's peculiar people, by the Gentile nations, had they really been desirous of it.

posterity, would have beheld the glory of the Lord, from age to age; whereby, being naturally of a right temper, they would have been effectually influenced to love him, live to him, delight in him, and praise him forever; or, in St. Paul's words, "to glorify God as God, and be thankful." And I suppose that all mankind, still having the same natural powers, and the same outward advantages, are therefore entirely to blame for, and wholly inexcusable in, all their ignorance, blindness, and wickedness; especially considering they perfectly love to be what they are, and hate to be reclaimed, and stand ready to resist the light when offered, and shut their eyes against the truth, from whatever quarter it comes. "The heavens" — still as clearly as ever — do "declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament showeth his handy work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." The natural perfections of God are clearly to be seen in all his works at the first glance, and his moral perfections would be equally evident to an intelligent creature of a right temper at the second thought; and then his glory would immediately shine brighter than the sun, and every heart be ravished with his infinite beauty. But such is our alienation from the Deity in this apostate world, and such the vitiated temper of our minds, that while angels see the divine glory in all his works, (Rev. iv. 11,) men, sottish, brutish men, though they have eyes to see, see not; but are blind to the manifestations which God makes of himself, "because they do not like to have God in their knowledge." And now, —

3. As to the heathens being accepted for honestly improving their powers and advantages, it is, in the first place, most certain, from St. Paul's account, that they were at the very greatest distance from doing so. But, secondly, if they had done so, yea, if they had discovered so good a temper of mind as perfectly to have conformed to the divine law, yet it is the very scope of all the apostle's reasoning, in the three first chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, to prove that, by the deeds of the law, no flesh, neither Jew nor Gentile, can be justified. And since the law is holy, just, and good, it is not, indeed, reasonable that any thing short of sinless perfection, from first to last, should pass with the righteous Governor of the world as a condition of acceptance. Future obedience, let it be ever so perfect, can do nothing to make amends for former neglects; as has been already proved in another place. But that which, of itself alone, is entirely sufficient to say in this matter, is, that it is expressly declared, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," — or every breach of the first

table — "and unrighteousness," — or every breach of the second table of the law, — "of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness;" which words are evidently designed by the apostle to represent the character and state of the heathen world; for he spends the rest of the chapter in enlarging upon this head, showing how the heathen held the truth in unrighteousness, and were exposed to the wrath of God for their ungodliness and unrighteousness; and he concludes them all "under sin" and "guilty," and lost forever, unless they obtain justification "by faith in Christ." (Rom. iii. 9, 19, 20, 30.) And thus we see how all mankind have not only sufficient natural powers, but also sufficient outward advantages to know God, and perfectly conform to his law, even the heathen themselves; and that the very reason they do not, is their want of such a temper as they ought to have, and their voluntary, rooted enmity to God, and love to sin.* And now that they are wholly to blame and entirely inexcusable, appears still in a clearer light.

But before I leave this point, I must make this remark, viz.: That if God looks upon the advantages of the heathen sufficient, no wonder that he so often speaks of the advantages of his own professing people as being much more than barely sufficient, even although they enjoy only the outward means

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* *Obj.* But it is impossible they should love God with all their hearts, if they have no hopes of finding favor in his sight; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Heb. xi. 6.)

Ans. *Coming to God*, in Heb. xi. 6, evidently implies not only a conformity to the law, but also a compliance with the gospel; that is, it implies not only a disposition to love God with all our hearts, but also a trusting in him for the divine favor and eternal life upon gospel encouragements; which gospel encouragements must, therefore, be understood and believed, or it will indeed be impossible so to trust in him. But I did not say that the heathen were under sufficient outward advantages for an evangelical returning to God, which is what is intended in Heb. xi. 6, but only for a compliance with the law of nature, which is what is intended in Rom. i. 20, 21.

Obj. But still, is it not, in the nature of things, impossible they should love God, if they have no hopes of finding favor in his sight?

Ans. Let common sense decide the case. A servant hates his master, a very good man, without cause, murders his only son, steals a thousand pounds of his money, runs away into a far country, spends several years in riotous living. At length he is caught, brought home to his master, who is a man in authority; before him he has his trial, is condemned, and has no hope of favor. But how does this render it impossible, in the nature of things, that he should love his master? Why cannot he love his master now, as well as ever he could? He has the same original grounds of love he used to have. He used to love his master; his master is as worthy of his esteem as ever. He has no cause to esteem his master any the less, because he himself has been such a villain, or because he is doomed to die for his crimes — a punishment justly due. To dislike his master for these things would be perfectly unreasonable. Surely, were he but of a right temper, he could not but take all the blame to himself, and justify his master, and esteem and love him, and be heartily sorry for all his villanies. He can be under no inability but what must arise from a bad heart. The application is easy.

of grace, without the inward influences of the Holy Spirit; for, if the natural advantages of the heathen are sufficient, surely the supernatural advantages of those who enjoy a divine revelation are much more than sufficient. And if the advantages of those who enjoy only a divine revelation are much more than sufficient, no wonder, then, that those who lived in the days of Moses, Isaiah, and Christ, are represented as very monsters of wickedness, for remaining blind, senseless, impenitent, and unholy, since they enjoyed such great and so many superadded advantages. No wonder, therefore, that Moses every where represents the children of Israel as such a stubborn, perverse, stiff-necked, rebellious people, (particularly see Deut. ix.,) and makes as if their blindness, senselessness, and impenitency, were most unaccountable and inexcusable, since their eyes had seen and their ears had heard such things, and their advantages had been so great. "And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes, in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land"—and that he might set forth the greatness of the things which they had seen, he adds—"The great temptations which thine eyes have seen; the signs, and those great miracles,"—all which have been enough to melt a heart of stone, and yet, as he goes on to say—"the Lord" (by all these things which have been so much more than enough) "hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." All these means have not to this day attained the end, and made you see, and feel, and know what a God the Lord is, and bring you to love him, and fear him, and walk in all his ways. Moses evidently speaks of it as a very strange thing, that they should be blind, senseless, impenitent, and unholy, after such means and advantages; as if they were most inexcusable, yea, under a very aggravated guilt; whereby he plainly takes it for granted, that their advantages had been much more than sufficient, had it not been for their want of a right temper, and their wicked obstinacy and perverseness. And yet he mentions none but outward means and outward advantages, and does not give the least intimation that they had had any inward assistance from the Holy Spirit; he does not bring any such thing into the account, but wholly aggravates their sin and their great inexcusableness, from the consideration of their outward helps. "Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt," etc. And no wonder he thought them so very inexcusable, since God looks upon the heathen world without excuse, in that while "the heavens declare the glory of the Lord," etc., they do not see

with their eyes, and perceive with their hearts, and, from a sense of his glory, only thus discovered, love him, and live to him; for, if their advantages are enough, surely the advantages of the Israelites were much, very much, more than enough.

And upon the same hypothesis, it is no wonder that God looked upon the case of the children of Israel as he did in the time of Isaiah; who, from the days of Moses even to that day, had from age to age enjoyed such outward advantages as they had, and had had such outward means used with them; and in that age, enjoyed so great an outward privilege as the daily prophesying and preaching of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah; who, some, if not all of them, prophesied, it is very probable, forty or fifty years together at the same time, as we may learn from the first verse in their several books, which tell us when and how long they prophesied, compared with the account we have of those kings' reigns in the books of the Kings, in whose reigns they prophesied; no wonder, I say, God speaks as he does in Isaiah, (v. 1—7:) "My beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein." Here is represented the natural powers and outward advantages of God's people. "And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Here all the blame is entirely laid on themselves, and their conduct is considered as being inexcusably, yea, unaccountably bad. "And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof," etc. Where nothing can be plainer than that the children of Israel are represented as enjoying sufficient advantages for fruitfulness; yea, advantages much more than barely sufficient; and that their proving as they did, was unspeakably vile and God-provoking, and for which they deserved utter ruin; and for which, indeed, God did afterwards, according to his declared design, bring utter ruin upon them. But all those advantages were outward; nor is the inward assistance of the Holy Spirit any where brought into the account, whenever the greatness of their advantages is set forth on purpose to show how aggravated their wickedness was; but this is constantly the charge, (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15—17:) "And the Lord God of their fathers sent unto them by his messengers, rising up betimes and send-

ing; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of God arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees;" not because they did not improve the inward assistances of the Holy Spirit, but because they did not improve their outward advantages; did not hearken to God's messengers. And in this strain their confessions ran, when God, by his grace, had brought them to see what they had done, (Dan. ix. 5, 6, etc.:) "We have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments. Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants, the prophets, which spake in thy name." The not hearkening to them is mentioned as the great aggravation; but their not improving the inward assistance of the Spirit, is not brought into the account. (Neh. ix. 30.)

It is evident that the children of Israel, considered as a nation, had not special grace, or the renewing, sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, as one of their advantages, from Jer. xxxi. 31—33. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant I made with their fathers, in the day I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my [national] covenant they brake, although I was as a husband unto them, saith the Lord.) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people;" where the renewing, sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit are mentioned as a peculiar privilege the Jewish people were not entitled unto as a nation, by that national covenant which God entered into with them, as such, at Mount Sinai, (Exod. xix. Deut. v.;) and which afterwards, at the end of forty years, was renewed at the borders of Canaan. (Deut. xxix.) Nor indeed were there any inward influences of the Holy Spirit, at all, promised in that national covenant, as a common privilege, to be by them in common enjoyed. And if they were not entitled to this privilege, as a nation, by their national covenant, then there is no evidence that they, as a nation, did enjoy it; and therefore, when God speaks as if he had done all for that nation that could be done, he plainly has respect only to outward means, which were all that they, as a nation, enjoyed. And as to them, he evidently had good ground so to say; since he had done such great things for them, and sent such prophets among

them, and been continually taking all pains, from age to age, to make them a holy people; even as we are ready to say concerning the people of a particular parish, where there is a learned, godly, plain, searching, powerful, enlightening, faithful, minister, such as Mr. Shepard was in his day, "What more could be done for such a people, that is not done?" And therefore, when Stephen charged the Jews, "that they always resisted the Holy Ghost, as their fathers had done," he means that they had always resisted the Holy Ghost, as speaking in and by their prophets, as now they did the same Spirit that spake in and by him; as is plain from verse 52, and as is also evident from Neh. ix. 30. And besides, there is not the least intimation, that those Jews, to whom Stephen spoke, were under any of the inward influences of the Holy Spirit, but they seem rather to act like creatures wholly left of God. And this hint may help us to understand that phrase in Neh. ix. 20, compared with Num. xi. 17. So that, from the whole, it is evident that the children of Israel, as a nation, were, in Isaiah's time, looked upon as enjoying advantages much more than sufficient for their being a holy and fruitful people, had they been of a right temper, and not so wickedly obstinate and perverse in their bad disposition; and yet their advantages were only outward, and the inward influences of the Holy Spirit are not taken into the account.

And well might their advantages be thus esteemed, upon the forementioned hypothesis. Yea, if all mankind are able, in respect to their natural capacities, to yield perfect obedience, and if the advantages of the very heathen were sufficient, had it not been for the want of a right temper in them, and for their very bad disposition, it is no wonder that God speaks here concerning his peculiar people, whose outward advantages were exceedingly great, as if he had had very raised expectations of their being a holy people: "Wherefore, when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" "I have done all, as to outward means, that could be done, to make you a holy people; enough, and more than enough; and I looked and expected that you should have been so: and whence is it that you are not? How unaccountable is it! And how great is your wickedness! And how great your guilt!" For it is God's way, in the Holy Scriptures, to speak to men after the manner of men, who are wont to have their expectations of fruitfulness raised, when they sow or plant in a fertile soil, well manured and cultivated. (Matt. xxi. 33—41.) Just so a master is wont to speak to his servant, who is strong, and able for business: "I looked that you should have done such a piece of

work; wherefore is it not done? You had time enough, and strength enough;" and that although he knew, in all reason, beforehand, that his servant would not do it, because of his lazy, unfaithful temper; the design of such speeches being to represent the great unreasonableness and inexcusableness of such a conduct.

And finally, upon the same hypothesis, it is no wonder that Jesus Christ represents the people of Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Capernaum, as enjoying advantages sufficient to have brought even Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, to repentance, which, in Scripture account, are some of the most wicked cities in the world; and so, consequently, more than barely sufficient to have brought them to repentance, who were, by profession, the people of God; for they had enjoyed the ministry of Christ himself, and seen very many of his mighty works. (Matt. xi. 20—24.) If the advantages of the heathen world are sufficient, well might Christ, speaking after the manner of men, seem to be so confident that Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, would have repented, if they had seen his mighty works; and well might he speak as if the people of Chorazin, etc., had enjoyed advantages more than barely sufficient, and lay all the blame of their impenitency upon them; yea, and look upon them as under an aggravated guilt, and give them so heavy a doom. And yet nothing can be plainer than that the advantages which they enjoyed were only outward, for no other are brought into the account, as aggravations of their guilt: "Woe unto thee, for if the mighty works which were done in you," etc. He does not, in the least, intimate as if they had any inward help from the Holy Spirit, but only says he has done mighty works among them; yea, in the 25th verse, he plainly declares that they were left destitute of special grace.

And thus, while, with St. Paul, we look upon the advantages even of the heathen world as sufficient to lead them to the true knowledge of God, and a perfect conformity to his law, but for their want of a good temper, and their voluntary aversion to God and love to sin, we easily see whence it is that the external advantages of those who enjoy the benefit of a divine revelation, together with other outward means of grace, are represented as being much more than barely sufficient; and consequently their guilt in remaining impenitent and unholy, as being doubly aggravated.

And before I leave this point, I must make one remark more, namely, that if the advantages of the heathen world were sufficient, but for their want of a good temper, their voluntary aversion to God and love to sin, to lead them to

the true knowledge of God, and a perfect conformity to his law, as has been proved, then God was not under any natural obligations to grant to any of mankind any supernatural advantages, but still might justly have required sinless perfection of all, and threatened eternal damnation for the least defect; I say, God was under no natural obligations, that is, any obligations arising from his nature and perfections; for he might, consistent with his holiness, justice, and goodness, have left all mankind to themselves, without any supernatural advantages, since their natural advantages were sufficient, and they were obstinate in their ignorance, blindness, and wickedness. Most certainly God was not bound to have sent his Son, his Spirit, his word, his messengers, and entreat and beseech those who perfectly hated him, and hated to hear from him, and were disposed to crucify his Son, resist his Spirit, pervert his word, and kill his messengers, to turn and love him, and serve him; but might, even consistent with infinite goodness itself, have let them take their course, and go on in the way they were set in, and have damned them all at last.

All that the great and glorious Governor of the world requires of mankind, in the law of nature, is, that they love him with all their hearts and souls, and live as brethren together in his world; which is infinitely reasonable in itself, and which they have sufficient natural powers to do. And he has stretched abroad the heavens as a curtain over their heads, which declare the glory of the Lord; and in the earth, and in all his works, his perfections are clearly to be seen, so that all are under sufficient advantages for the knowledge of him; but mankind hate God, and say unto the Almighty, "Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of thy ways:" and hence they still remain ignorant of God, averse to him, and in love with sin. And now, I say, it is as evident as the sun at noonday, that God might fairly have damned such creatures, without using any more means with them. His law being thus upon a perfect level with their natural powers and natural advantages, he was not obliged, as he was the righteous and good Governor of the world, to grant them any supernatural assistance, either outward, by an external revelation, or inward, by the internal influences of his Holy Spirit; and therefore it is, that the great Ruler of the world has always acted sovereignly and arbitrarily in these matters, bestowing these supernatural favors upon whom he pleases, as being obliged to none. Thus he has done as to the external revelation. "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation,

and as for his judgments, they have not known them." And thus he has done as to the internal influences of his Spirit. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." And thus God, even to this day, as to both outward and inward helps, "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion." He effectually sends the gospel to one nation, and not to another; and where the gospel is preached, he, by his Spirit, awakens, convinces, humbles, converts whom he pleases, and leaves the rest.

And thus the objection, from the heathen's not having sufficient outward advantages, has been answered; and, from the answer, I have taken occasion to make these, I hope, not unprofitable remarks; and may now return and repeat my former assertion, with still higher degrees of assurance, namely, that mankind, are altogether to blame for, and entirely inexcusable in, their non-conformity to the holy law of God, and therefore justly deserve damnation; and that even the heathen, as well as others.

Thus have I endeavored to show what is the exact measure of love and obedience that God requires of the children of men, and that all mankind have sufficient natural powers and outward advantages, and that all their blindness, ignorance, and wickedness, are voluntary, chosen, and loved. And I have been the larger upon these things, in order to clear up the justice of God and his law, and the grace of God in his gospel — both which have been sadly misrepresented by those who have not aright understood or well attended to these things. They have said that it is not just in God to require sinless perfection of mankind, or damn any for the want of it. They have said that the law is abated and brought down to a level with I hardly know what, unless I call it the vitiated, depraved temper of an apostate world, who both hate God and his holy law, and want an act of toleration and indulgence to be passed in favor of their corruptions, that, at heart, they may remain dead in sin, and yet, by a round of external duties, be secured from damnation at last. And so they have, like the Pharisees of old, destroyed the law by their abatements; and now the law, only by which is the knowledge of sin, being thus laid aside, they are ignorant of their sinful, guilty, helpless, undone state, and so are insensible of their need of the sovereign grace of God, through Jesus Christ, to save them; and fancy they are well disposed enough to turn

to God of their own accord. And having imbibed such notions of religion, they easily see that the better sort of heathen have, for substance, the same religion with themselves, and therefore have equal charity for them: not being really sensible of their need of gospel grace for themselves, they have full charity for the heathen, who never so much as heard of it. But what I have said is sufficient, I think, to clear the justice of God in his law, and the grace of God in the gospel, and sweep away this refuge of lies, by which so many gladly quiet their consciences, and wofully deceive their own souls. However, of these things we shall still have something more afterwards.

Thus we have gone through what was proposed; have considered what was implied in love to God, and from what motives we are to love him, and what measure of love is required: and all that has been said cannot possibly be summed up in fewer or plainer words than these: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is the first and great commandment; in conformity whereunto the first and great part of religion does consist. And the second, which is like unto it, being the foundation of the other half of this part of religion, now under consideration, is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" which is what we are, in the next place, to proceed to a consideration of.

SECTION IV.

OF LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOR.

"THOU shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In which words we have, First. The duty required — "thou shalt love." Secondly. The original, natural ground and reason of it intimated — "thy neighbor;" which name, given to our fellow-men, may lead us to consider them as being what they are in themselves, and as sustaining some kind of character and relation with regard to us. Thirdly. The rule and standard by which our love to our neighbor is to be regulated — "as thyself." Here, therefore, we may consider what is implied in love to our neighbor, from what motives we are to love him, and by what standard our love is to be regulated, as to its nature and measure.

First. Let us consider what is implied in that love to our

neighbor, which, by the law of God, is required of us. And, in general, it is presupposed, or implied, that we have a right temper of mind; an upright, impartial, candid, benevolent temper, even to perfection, without the least tincture of any thing to the contrary; for, without this, we shall not, we cannot, view our neighbors in a true light; nor think of them, nor judge of them, nor feel towards them, exactly as we ought. A wrong temper, a selfish, partial, uncandid, censorious, carping, bitter, stingy, proud temper will unavoidably give a wrong turn to all our thoughts of, and feeling towards, our neighbors, as is manifest from the nature of the thing, and from universal experience. Solomon observes, that "as a man thinketh, so is he;" and it is as true, that as a man is, so he thinketh; for out of the heart, the temper and disposition of the man, proceed his thoughts of, and feelings towards, both persons and things, according to our Savior. (Matt. xii. 33—35.) An upright, therefore impartial, candid, benevolent temper to perfection, without the least tincture of any thing to the contrary, is presupposed and implied in the love required, as being, in the nature of things, absolutely necessary thereto. We must have a right temper, and, under the influence thereof, be perfectly in a disposition to view our neighbors in a right light, and think and judge of them, and be affected towards them, as we ought; that is, "to love them as ourselves." Particularly,

1. There is a certain esteem and value for our fellow-men, which, upon sundry accounts, is their due, that is implied in this love. There are valuable things in mankind: some have one thing, and some another; some have gifts, and some have grace; some have five talents, and some two, and some one; some are worthy of a greater esteem, and some less, considered merely as they are in themselves: and then some are by God set in a higher station, and some in a lower, sustaining various characters, and standing in various relations; as magistrates and subjects, ministers and people, parents and children, masters and servants, etc. And there is a certain esteem and respect due to every one in his station. Now, with a disinterested impartiality, and with a perfect candor, and a hearty good will, ought we to view the various excellencies of our neighbors, and consider their various stations, characters, and relations; and, in our hearts, we ought to give every one his due honor and his proper place, being perfectly content, for our parts, to be and to act in our own sphere, where God has placed us; and, by our fellow-mortals, to be considered as being just what we are; and indeed, this, for substance, is the

duty of every one in the whole system of intelligent creatures. As for God most high, the throne is his proper place, and all his intelligent creatures have their proper places, both with respect to God, and with respect to one another; which places they are bound to take, and to acquiesce in with all their hearts. We have an instance of this temper, to a good degree, in David. He was sensible that Saul was the Lord's anointed, and that it became him to render honor to whom honor is due, and fear to whom fear, and his heart was tender: hence "David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt." This temper will naturally dispose us to feel and conduct right towards our superiors, inferiors, and equals; and so lay a solid foundation for the performance of all relative duties. The contrary to all this is a proud and conceited temper, attended with a disposition to despise superiors, scorn equals, and trample upon inferiors — a temper in which men overvalue themselves, their friends, and party, and undervalue and despise all others. Such do not consider persons and things as being what they are, and think, and judge, and be affected, and act accordingly: nor do they consider or regard the different stations in which men are set by God, or the characters they sustain by divine appointment. They are not governed by the reason of things, and the sense of what is right and fit, but by their own corruptions. This was the case with Korah and his company, when they rose up against Moses and Aaron, and said, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." Pride makes superiors scornful in their temper and tyrannical in their government; and pride makes inferiors envious in their temper and ungovernable in their lives; and it makes equals jealous, unfriendly, contentious. In a word, it lays a foundation for the neglect of all relative duties, and for a general discord and confusion among mankind.

2. We ought not only to consider, esteem, and respect our fellow-men, as being what they are, and, with a perfect impartiality, give them their due, in our very hearts, according to what they are, and to the stations they stand in, being perfectly content, for our own parts, with the place which God has allotted to us in the system, and to be and act in our own proper sphere, and willing to be considered by others as being just what we are; but it is further implied in the love required, that we be perfectly benevolent towards them, that is, that we consider their happiness as to body and soul, as to time and eternity, as being what it really is, and are, according to the measure of our natural capacities, thoroughly sensible of

its value and worth, and are disposed to be affected, and act accordingly; that is, to be tender of it, value and promote it, as being what it is; to long, and labor, and pray for it, and to rejoice in their prosperity and be grieved for their adversity; and all from a cordial love and genuine good will: the contrary to which is a selfish spirit, whereby we are inclined only to value, and seek, and rejoice in our own welfare, and not care for our neighbor's any further than we are influenced by self-love and self-interest; which selfish spirit also lays a foundation for envy at our neighbor's prosperity, and hard-heartedness in the time of his adversity, and inclines us to hurt his interest to promote our own. To love our neighbor as ourselves, makes it natural to do as we would be done by; but a selfish spirit makes it unnatural. Malevolence, malice, and spite, make it even natural to delight in our neighbor's misery. And hence it is, that revenge is so sweet, and backbiting and detraction so agreeable, in this fallen, sinful world.

3. I may add, that so far as our fellow-men are proper objects of delight and complacency, so far ought we to take delight and complacency in them. And hence it is that the godly man feels such a peculiar love to the children of God, for that image of God which he sees in them. The saints are, in his account, "the excellent of the earth, in whom is all his delight." The godly man is of Christ's temper, who said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." But wicked men are of another taste; and the things, the tempers, and dispositions in their neighbors, which to them appear excellent, and upon the account of which they delight in them, are odious in God's sight. "For that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God;" for it is the temper of wicked men not only to do wickedly themselves, but also to have pleasure in others that do so too. Those who are vain, or unclean, or intemperate, suit each other, and take delight in one another's company; while, at the same time, they distaste and disrelish those things among mankind which are truly most worthy of our delight. In a word, we ought so to esteem others as to be heartily disposed to treat them with all that respect which is their due; and to have such a tender regard for their welfare as to be perfectly disposed, in every instance, and in every respect, to do as we would be done by; and to take notice of all their good properties with that entire friendliness and perfect candor, as may dispose us to take all that delight and complacency in them which is fit. In order unto all which, it is requisite that we

be perfectly free from any tincture of pride, selfishness, etc., and have our hearts full of humility, benevolence, candor, and goodness. And now, —

Secondly. The motives by which we are to be influenced thus to love our neighbors as ourselves, are such as these: 1. It is right and fit in itself. As the apostle, exhorting children to obey their parents in the Lord, uses this motive, "For this is right." The reason of God's requiring of us to love our neighbors as ourselves, is because it is, in its own nature, right that we should; and this ought therefore to move and influence us to do so. There is the same general reason why I should love my neighbor, as why I should love myself. Lovely things are as worthy of being loved in him as in me; and therefore, by me, ought, in all reason, to be loved as much. There is the same reason why my neighbor should be esteemed as being what he is, and according to the station he stands in, as that I should. To esteem myself above my neighbor merely because I am myself, without any other reason, is unfit and wrong, at first sight. So to admire my children, my friends, my party, as if there were none such, merely because they are mine, is unreasonable and absurd. My very worst enemy ought, by me, to be considered and esteemed as being what he is, with an impartiality perfectly disinterested, as well as my very best friend. Good properties are not at all the better, merely for belonging to me, or to my friends; or the worse, for belonging to my neighbor, or my enemy. But it is right I should view things as they are, and be affected towards them accordingly; indeed, I ought to be so far from a disposition to esteem myself above others, and to be prejudiced in my own favor, since I am capable of a much more full and intimate acquaintance with my own sins and follies, than with the sins and follies of others, that I ought rather to be habitually disposed to prefer others in honor above myself. (Rom. xii. 10. Phil. ii. 3.) And so, as to my neighbor's welfare and happiness, there is the same general reason why it should be dear to me, as that my own should. His welfare is worth as much, in itself, as mine; it is as worthy, therefore, to be valued, esteemed, sought after, and rejoiced in, as mine. It is true, my welfare is more immediately put under my care by God Almighty, and so it is fit it should by me be more especially taken care of; not that it is of greater worth for being mine, for it is not; but only because it is more immediately put under my care by God Almighty. The same may be said of the welfare of my family, etc.; but still my neighbor's welfare is, in itself, as

precious and dear as mine, and he is my neighbor, he is flesh and blood as well as I, and wants to be happy as well as I, and is my brother, by Adam. We are all but one great family, the offspring of the same common parents; we should, therefore, all be affected as brethren towards one another, love as brethren, and seek each other's welfare most tenderly and affectionately, as being sensible how dear and precious the welfare of each other is; this is perfectly right. And so we should bear one another's burdens; mourn with them that mourn, and rejoice with them that rejoice, as being tender-hearted, cordial friends to every body; and this from a real sight and sense that such a temper and conduct is perfectly right and fit, in the nature of things. And whereas there may be several things in my neighbor truly agreeable, it is evidently right I should delight in those good properties according to their real worth; it is a duty I owe to my neighbor, the possessor, and to God, the giver of those good gifts.

2. But that I should thus love my neighbor as myself, is not only, in its own nature, right, but is also enjoined upon me by the law and authority of God, the supreme Governor of the world. So that, from love to God, and from a sense of his right to me, and authority over me, I ought out of obedience to him to love my neighbor as myself, and always, and in all respects, to do as I would be done by: and not to do so, is not only to injure my neighbor, but to rebel against God, my King and Governor, and so becomes an infinite evil. Hence, it is charged upon David, that, by his conduct respecting Uriah, he had "despised the Lord," and "despised the commandment of the Lord;" and this is mentioned as the "great evil" of his sin. For he had not merely murdered one of his fellow-worms, but risen up in rebellion against the most high God; and practically said, "I care not for God, nor his authority. I love my lust, and will gratify it for all him." And therefore, when David was brought to true repentance, the native language of his soul to God was, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." It is rebellion; therefore it is despising the Lord; it is an infinite evil not to love our neighbors as ourselves.

3. We have not only the authority, but also the example, of God to influence us to this great duty of love and benevolence. God is love: he has an infinite propensity to do good, and that in cases where there is no motive from without to excite him; yea, where there is every thing to the contrary. He loves to make his sun to rise, and his rain to fall, upon the evil and unthankful. He loves to fill the hearts of all with food and

gladness, and to strew innumerable blessings round a guilty, God-hating world; yea, out of his great goodness, he has given his only Son to die for sinners, and offers grace and glory, and all good things, through him; being ready to pardon, and receive to favor, any poor, guilty wretch, that will repent, and return to him through Jesus Christ. And now for us, after all this, not to love our fellow-men, yea, not to love our very worst enemies, is very vile. Since "God has so loved us, we ought" surely "to love one another." Since he has treated us, his enemies, so kindly, we ought now, "as dear children," to imitate him and "love our enemies, and bless them that curse us, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us." The infinite beauty in the goodness of the divine nature lays us under infinite obligations to imitate it in the temper of our minds, and in our daily conduct. And it is ingratitude, it is a shame, it is abominable wickedness, not to love our worst enemies, and forgive the greatest injuries. Since the great Governor of the world has treated us worms and rebels as he has, one would think that after all this we should never be able to find a heart to hate or injure any mortal: surely, we are under very strong obligations to accept that divine exhortation, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from among you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." "Be ye followers of God as dear children." Besides, there are many additional obligations to love and benevolence, and to peculiar respect and kindness between husband and wife, parents and children, friend and friend, etc., arising from their mutual relations and dependencies, and from special kindnesses already received or hoped for. And now,

Thirdly. As to the standard by which our love is to be regulated. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In order rightly to understand it, we must, 1. Place ourselves, sensibly, as in the presence of the infinitely great and glorious God, before whom all the nations of the earth are nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity; and in the light of God's greatness and glory, we must take a view of our own littleness and deformity, and so learn how we ought to be affected towards ourselves, compared with God; and as we ought to love ourselves, so ought we to love our neighbor. And now, in general, we ought to be disposed towards God, as being what he is, and towards ourselves and neighbors, as being what we and they are. Particularly, God's honor in the world ought to appear infinitely more valuable and precious than our own, and there-

fore our own ought to seem as a thing of no worth, compared with his, and as such to be freely parted with when God's honor calls for it; and as free should we be to see the reputation of our dearest friends given up for God's sake. The same may be said of our worldly interest, and of all our worldly comforts, when compared with God's interest and the interest of his Son's kingdom in the world, and of the worldly interests and comforts of our dearest friends. All, both ours and theirs, is comparatively nothing, and ought to appear so to us; yea, our lives and their lives are just the same things; comparatively of no worth, and to be parted with in a moment, without the least reluctance, when God's honor or interest calls therefor. 2. In order to a right understanding of this standard, we must also observe, that our love to ourselves is habitual, unfeigned, fervent, active, and permanent; so also must be our love to our neighbors. 3. A regular self-love respects all our interests, but especially our spiritual and eternal interest: so ought our love to our neighbors. 4. A regular self-love naturally prompts us to be concerned for our welfare tenderly, to seek it diligently and prudently; to rejoice in it heartily, and to be grieved for our calamities sincerely; so ought our love to our neighbors to prompt us to feel and conduct with regard to their welfare. 5. Self-love makes us take an unfeigned pleasure in promoting our own welfare. We do not think it hard to do so much for ourselves; the pleasure we take in promoting our welfare rewards our pains. The same genuine kind of love ought we to have to our neighbor; and so to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." 6. We ought never to speak of our neighbor's sins, or weaknesses, or any way expose him to shame and contempt in the world, in any case whatsoever, except such wherein it would be our duty to be willing ourselves to be so exposed by him, were we in his circumstances, and he in ours. And then we are to do it with that sensible tenderness for him that we could reasonably desire from him towards us in a like case.

Thus, then, we have briefly considered the second great command of the law, and see what that meaneth — "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." To love God with all our heart, lays a foundation, and prepares the way for us to love our neighbors as ourselves. It removes and takes away those things which are contrary to this love; such as pride, selfishness, worldliness, a narrow, stingy, envious, revengeful temper. True love to God mortifies and kills these things at the root. And, secondly, true love to God assimilates us to the divine nature, and makes us like God in the temper of our minds.

But God is love: and the more we are like God, the more are our hearts, therefore, framed to love and benevolence. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Love to God sweetens the soul, and enlarges our hearts to love our fellow-men. And, thirdly, the more we love God, the more sacred is his authority with us, and the more glorious, amiable, and animating does his example appear, and the greater sense have we of our obligations to gratitude to him; all which tends jointly to influence us to all love and goodness towards our neighbors. So that he that knows God, and loves him, will be full of love to mankind; and, therefore, "he that loveth not, knoweth not God." On the other hand, where there is no true love to God, there is no true love to mankind; but the heart is under the government of pride, selfishness, and other corruptions, which are contrary to love. So that a genuine love to mankind is peculiar to the godly. (1 John iv. 7, 8.)

And now, from what has been said, we may evidently see these following sorts of love to our neighbor are, neither of them, the love required, however nearly they may sometimes seem to resemble it.

1. What is commonly called natural compassion, is not the love here required; for the most wicked, profane man may be of a very compassionate temper; so may the proud, the selfish, the envious, the malicious, and spiteful man — as experience plainly shows. And besides, natural compassion does not take its rise from any sense of the rectitude and fitness of things, or any regard to the divine authority, but merely from the animal constitution; and men seem to be properly passive in it. It is much the same thing in the human, as in the brutal nature. It is, therefore, a different thing from the love here required.

2. The same may be said of what is called good-nature. It arises merely from animal constitution, and is not the love here required; for such a man is not influenced in his love by the reason and nature of things, or the authority of the great Governor of the world, or from a consideration of the infinite goodness of the divine nature, any more than the beasts are, who are some of them much better tempered than others; so that this sort of love has nothing of the nature of religion in it. And it is evident that many wicked and ungodly men have much of this natural good temper, who yet have no regard to God or duty; yea, a secret grudge against a neighbor, reigning in the heart, may be, in the good-natured man, consistent with his good nature, but it is not consistent with the love here required; and therefore they are evidently two things.

3. That love which is commonly called natural affection, is

not the love here required. It is true, that man is worse than the beasts, who is without natural affection, for they evidently are not; but every man is not a saint, because he has natural affection; and it is true we owe a peculiar love, according to God's law, to our relatives; but natural affection is not this love: for there are many ungodly wretches, who care neither for God nor his law, who have as much natural affection as any in the world; yea, it is a common thing for ungodly parents to make very idols of their children; for them, they go, and run, and work, and toil, by night and day, to the utter neglect of God and their own souls; and surely this cannot be the very love which God requires. And besides, as natural affection naturally prompts parents to love their children more than God, and be more concerned for their welfare than for his glory, so it is commonly a bar in the way of their loving others as they ought. They have nothing to give to the poor and needy, to the widow and the fatherless; they must lay up all for their children: yea, many times they rake and scrape, cheat and defraud, and, like mere earth-worms, bury themselves in the world; and all this for the sake of their children. And yet all this love to their children does not prompt them to take care of their souls. They never teach their children to pray, nor instruct them to seek after God; they love their bodies, but care little for their souls. Their love to the one is beyond all bounds, but, to the other, is little or nothing; it is an irrational fondness, and not the love required. Indeed, if parents loved their children as they ought to do, their love would effectually influence them to take care of their souls, and do all their duty to them — which natural affection evidently does not; and therefore it is not that love with which God, in his law, requires parents to love their children. Nor, indeed, does there seem to be any more of the nature of true virtue or real religion in the natural affection of men, than there is in the natural affection of beasts — both resulting merely from animal nature, and a natural self-love, without any regard to the reason and nature of things.

4. Nor is that the love here required, which arises merely from a party spirit — because such a one is of their party, and on their side, and loves those whom they love, and will plead, stand up, and contend for them, and maintain their cause. For such a love is pregnant with hatred and ill-will to every body else; and nothing will humor and gratify it more than to see the opposite party hated, reviled, and blackened; and besides, such a love is nothing but self-love in another shape. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neigh-

bor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies."

5. Nor is that the love here required, which arises merely from others' love to me — as if a rich man is kind and bountiful to poor people all around him, and appears to love and pity them, they, though almost ever so wicked, will feel a sort of love to him. But if this rich man happens to be a civil magistrate, and is called to sit as a judge in their case, and passes judgment against them for their crimes, now their love dies, and enmity, and hatred, and revenge begin to ferment in their hearts. In this case, it is not the man they love, but rather his kindnesses; and their seeming love is nothing but a certain operation of self-love. And, indeed, however full of love persons may seem to be to their neighbors, if all arises merely from self-love, or is for self-ends, nothing is genuine; and that whether things worldly, or things religious, occasion their love. A poor man will love and honor those who are rich, if he hopes to get any thing by it. A rich man may be kind to the poor, with an eye to his credit. An awakened sinner will love an awakening preacher, in hopes he shall be converted by his ministry. A minister may seem to show a world of love to the souls of sinners, and all with an eye to applause. Hypocrites will love a godly minister, so long as he thinks well of them, and happens not to detect their hypocrisy in his public preaching. Even the Galatians were full of love to Paul for a while, so long as they thought he loved them, and had been the instrument of their conversion; yet, afterwards, they lost their love, and turned his enemies, for his telling them the truth; while others, who loved him truly for what he was, were more and more knit unto him for those very doctrines for which the Galatians hated him. "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not the publicans the same?" There is no virtue nor religion in such a kind of love, and it is evidently not the thing required by the divine law. And, indeed, it is a thing as difficult, and as contrary to corrupt nature, for us genuinely to love our neighbors as ourselves, as it is to love God with all our hearts; and there is as little true love between man and man, as there is between men and God. It is for our interest to love God, and it is for our interest to love our neighbors, and therefore men make as if they did so, when, really, there is nothing genuine and true. And, at the day of judgment, when a wicked world comes to God's bar, and their past conduct is all brought to light, nothing will be more manifest than that there never was a spark of true love to God or man in their hearts, but that, from first to last, they were actuated and

governed either by their animal constitution, or else merely by self-love.

6. I may add, nor is that the love required, when men love others merely because they are as bad, and so just like themselves. Nature and self-love will prompt the worst of men to do so. The vain and profligate love such as are as bad as themselves; and, from the same principle, erroneous persons have a peculiar regard for one another. And the enthusiast and blazing hypocrite may, from the same principle, seem to be full of love to their own sort, though full of malice against all others; and they may think that it is the image of God which they love in their brethren, when, indeed, it is only the image of themselves. Persons of a bad taste may greatly delight in those things in others, which are very odious in the sight of God: but surely this cannot be the love required; and yet, by this very thing, many a hypocrite thinks himself a true saint.

Thus we see what it is to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, and see these two distinguished from their counterfeits. And so we have gone through the two great commands of the law, in a conformity to which the very essence of religion does much consist.

And now it is added by our Savior, "Upon these two hang all the law and the prophets." The law and the prophets, that is, the inspired writings of the Old Testament, consider these two maxims, that we must love God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, as first and foundation principles; and all the various duties which they urge, respecting God and our fellow-men, are but so many inferences and deductions from them.

God must be loved with all the heart: and therefore we must make him our God, and none else, according to the first command; worship him according to his appointed institutions, agreeably to the second command; with becoming reverence and devotion, according to the third; and that in all such set times as he hath appointed in his word, according to the fourth.

Our neighbor must be loved as ourselves: and therefore we must render honor to whom honor is due, according to the fifth command; and be tender of our neighbor's life, chastity, estate, and good name, according to the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commands; and rejoice in his welfare and prosperity, according to the tenth: and, in all things, treat him as we could reasonably desire him to treat us, according to that golden rule of Jesus Christ, in Matthew vii. 12.

And as all the duties we owe to God and man, are thus, in the theory, but so many deductions, necessarily flowing from these two maxims or first principles, so, when the law of God is written in the heart of a sinner by divine grace, and put in his inward parts, there will, from these two principles, naturally flow all duties to God and his neighbor, in his daily practice; that is, from a disposition to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively, he will naturally be inclined and enabled sincerely to do all his will; to make him his God, according to the first command; to worship him according to his own appointments, with becoming reverence, and at all suitable times, according to the rest. It will be his nature to do all this; his meat and his drink, and so his greatest delight. And so, also, from a genuine disposition to love his neighbor as himself, he will be naturally inclined and enabled, in all things and at all times, sincerely to do as he would be done by. It will be his nature to do so; his meat and his drink, and so his greatest delight. (Heb. viii. 10. John xv. 14. 1 John ii. 3, 4. Psalm xix. 10.)

So that, as it is in theory, so also it is in practice; these two are like the seed that virtually contains the whole plant, or like the root from which the whole tree grows, with all its branches and fruit. And in proportion as a man loves God and his neighbor with a genuine love, in the same proportion will his inclination and ability, thence arising, be, to do all these duties; and consequently, when his love to God and his neighbor arrives to perfection, he will be perfectly inclined and enabled to be perfect in holiness and righteousness, and will actually, in all things, perfectly conform to both tables of the law. And it is equally evident, that, until a man has a genuine love to God and his neighbor in his heart, he will have neither inclination nor ability, in a moral and spiritual sense, to perform one act of true obedience: for as all true obedience, according to the law and prophets, is to flow from these two principles, so, consequently, according to the law and prophets, that is not true obedience which does not: and, therefore, when all a man's religion is merely from self-love, and for self-ends, he cannot be said, strictly speaking, to do any duty to God or his neighbor, or obey one command; for he only serves himself, and that from a supreme love to himself, which the law and the prophets do not require, but strictly forbid, in that they enjoin the direct contrary.

So that now, in a few words, we may here see wherein true religion does consist, as it stands distinguished from all the false religion in the world. The godly man, from seeing God to

be just such a one as he is, and from a real sense of his infinite glory and amiableness in being such, is thereby influenced to love him supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively; from which inward frame of heart, he freely runs the way of God's commands, and is in his element when doing God's will. He eats, he drinks, he works, he prays, and does all things, with a single eye to God, who has placed him in this his world, allotted to him his peculiar station, and pointed out before him all the business of life; always looking to him for all things, and always giving thanks unto his name for all his unspeakable goodness to a wretch so infinitely unworthy. And with a spirit of disinterested impartiality and genuine benevolence he views his fellow-men; gives them their places; takes his own, and loves them as himself: their welfare is dear to him; he is grieved at their miseries, and rejoices at their mercies, and delights to do all the good he can, to every one, in the place and station which God has set him in. And he finds that this new and divine temper is inwrought in his very nature; so that, instead of a forced religion, or a religion merely by fits, his very heart is habitually bent and inclined to such views and apprehensions; to such an inward temper, and to such an outward conduct.

This, this is the religion of the Bible; the religion which the law and the prophets, and which Christ and his apostles too, all join to teach; the religion which Christ came into the world to recover men unto, and to which the Spirit of God does actually recover every believer, in a greater or lesser degree. Thus those "who are dead in sin are quickened;" "have the law written in their hearts;" "are made new creatures, all old things being done away, and all things become new;" and are effectually taught "to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;" "and to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of their lives."

And this is specifically different from every sort of false religion in the world; for all kinds of false religion, however different in other things, yet all agree in this, to result merely from a principle of self-love, whereby fallen men, being ignorant of God, are inclined to love themselves supremely, and do all things for themselves ultimately. All the idolatrous religion of the heathen world, in which some took much pains, had its rise from this principle. They had some notion of a future state; of a heaven and a hell, as well as of temporal rewards and punishments, and so were moved by hope and fear, from a principle of self-love, to do something to pacify the anger of

the gods, and recommend themselves to the favor of their deities: and all the superstitions of the seemingly devout Papist — his *pater nosters*, his *ave marias*, his penances, and pilgrimages, and endless toils, — still arise from the same principle: so does all the religion of formalists, and legal hypocrites, in the reformed nations. It is a slavish fear of hell, and mercenary hope of heaven, which, from a principle of self-love, sets all a-going; yea, the evangelical hypocrite, who mightily talks of supernatural, divine light; of the Spirit's operations; of conversion, and a new nature, still, after all, has no higher principle in him than self-love. His conscience has been greatly enlightened, and his heart terrified, and his corruptions stunned; and he has, by the delusions of Satan, obtained a strong confidence of the love of God, and pardon of his sins; so that, instead of being influenced chiefly by the fear of hell, as the legal hypocrite is, he is ravished with heaven; but still, all is from self-love, and for self-ends; and, properly and scripturally speaking, he neither knows God, nor cares at all for him. And this is the very case with every graceless man living, of whatever denomination; whether a heathen, or Jew, or Christian; whether Papist, or Protestant; whether Churchman, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, or Separatist; whether a Pelagian, Arminian, Calvinist, Antinomian, Baptist, or Quaker. And this is the case with every graceless man living, whatever his attainments may otherwise be; though he hath all knowledge to understand all mysteries, and can speak with the tongues of men and angels, and has faith to remove mountains, and zeal enough to give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, yet he has no charity; he is perfectly destitute of this genuine love to God and his neighbor, and has no higher principle in his heart, from which all his religion proceeds, but a supreme love to himself. For, ever since our first parents aspired to be as gods, it has been the nature of all mankind to love themselves supremely, and to be blind to the infinite beauty of the divine nature; and it remains so to be with all, until renewed by divine grace; so that self-love is the highest principle from which unregenerate men do ever act, or can act.

Here, therefore, we have true religion; a religion specifically different from all other sorts of religion in the world, standing in a clear view: yea, and we may be absolutely certain that this is the very thing which has been described; for this conformity to the moral law is, throughout all the Bible, by Moses and the prophets, by Christ and his apostles, represented to be the very thing in which the essence of religion originally

consists. "Blessed be the name of the Lord forever, who has given us so clear a revelation of his will, and so sure and certain a guide as his word." Come here, all you poor, exercised, broken-hearted saints, that live in this dark, benighted world, where many run to and fro, and where there are a thousand different opinions, and every one confident that he is right; come here to the law and to the testimony; come here to Christ himself, and learn what the truth is, and be settled; be confirmed, and be established forever; and remember and practise upon those words of Jesus Christ, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." O, read the Bible; live lives of prayer and communion with God; yea, die to yourselves, the world, and sin, and return home to God through Jesus Christ; and love him, and live to him, and delight in him more and more; and be more and more disinterested and impartial; sincere and fervent in your love to your neighbors; do all the good, to every one, that you can; in a word, be the servants of God, and grow up into his image, and your certainty of divine truths will proportionably strengthen and increase; for the more your understandings are free from that darkness and prejudice that sin has introduced, the clearer will you view divine truths, and the greater sense will you have of their inherent divine glory; and so your belief of their divinity will be the more unshaken.

Having thus gone through with what was proposed, a general improvement of the whole is all that now remains; and, indeed, much use may be made of these great truths, which have been thus explained and proved, for our instruction in some of the most controverted points in religion, and to clear up the believer's gracious state, and also to promote our humiliation, and thankfulness, and universal obedience.

SECTION V.

RIGHT APPREHENSIONS OF THE LAW USEFUL TO CLEAR UP SOME OF THE MOST CONTROVERTED POINTS IN RELIGION.

Use I. Of instruction. We have seen what the law of God requires, and the infinite obligations we are under perfectly to conform to it; we have seen wherein a genuine conformity to the law consists, and how a genuine conformity to it differs from all counterfeits; and what has been said may help us to understand the following particulars: —

1. Wherein consisted the moral image of God in which Adam was created. That Adam was created in the image of God, is expressly affirmed in Gen. i. 27 — "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." And from these words we have just the same reason to believe that Adam was created in the moral, as that he was in the natural image of God; because they tell us in plain terms, without any distinction or exception, (nor is there any that can be gathered from any other text,) that he was created in the image of God; but the moral as well as the natural perfections of God are equally contained in his image. As to the political image of God, Adam, strictly speaking, was not created in that; because, as the Scriptures inform us, it was after his creation that he was made lord of this lower world. (Gen. i. 28.) And it is, I think, with less propriety, that this is, by divines, called the image of God; I do not know that it is any where so called in Scripture; and God was the same he is now, before he sustained the character of supreme Lord and Governor of the world. His natural and moral perfections comprised his whole image before the world was created; and in this his image was his creature, man, created; not in part of his image, for there is no such intimation in all the Bible; but in his image, comprising his moral, as well, and as much, as his natural perfections.

Now, the moral image of God does radically consist in a temper of mind or frame of heart perfectly answerable to the moral law; the moral law being, as it were, a transcript of the moral perfections of God. So that, from what has been said of the nature of the moral perfections of God, and of the nature of the moral law, we may learn wherein consisted that moral image of God in which Adam was created. He had a perfect moral rectitude of heart; a perfectly right temper of mind, and so was perfectly disposed to love God with all his heart, and his neighbors, if he had had any, as himself; was perfectly disposed to give God his place, and take his own; and consider God as being what he was, and be affected, and act accordingly; and to consider his fellow-men, if he had had any, as being what they were, and feel and act accordingly; and in this image of God was he created, as the Scriptures teach us; that is, he was brought into existence with such a temper connatural to him.

Now, here is a new-made creature in a new world, viewing God, and wondering at his infinite glory, looking all round, astonished at the divine perfections shining forth in all his works. He views the spacious heavens — they declare to him

the glory of the Lord—he sees his wisdom and his power—he wonders and adores: he looks around upon all his works—they clearly discover to him the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and godhead; and he stands amazed. God makes him lord of this lower world, appoints to him his daily employment, and puts him into a state of trial, setting life and death before him; and he sees the infinite wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness of God in all; he falls down and worships; he exults in God, and, with all his heart, gives up himself to God with sweetest delight; all is genuine, natural, and free, resulting from the native temper of his heart.

Here he beheld God in his infinite glory, viewed his works, contemplated his perfections, admired and adored him with a sweetness and pleasure of soul most refined. Here he saw God in all the trees, plants, and herbs in the garden, his happy seat, while, out of love to God and duty, he attended his daily business; he ate and drank, and blessed his great Benefactor. He saw that it was infinitely reasonable that he should love God with all his heart, and obey him in every thing, if eternal life had not at all been promised; both because God infinitely deserved it at his hand, and also in doing thereof there was the greatest satisfaction and delight. And he saw that if he, in any thing, should disobey his sovereign Lord and rightful Governor, it would be right, infinitely right, that he should be miserable forever, even if God had never so threatened; because to disobey such a God appeared to him an infinite evil. He looked upon the promise of eternal life as a mere free bounty. He looked upon the threatening of death as impartial justice; and while he considered eternal life under the notion of a reward promised to perfect obedience from God, his Governor, he saw his infinite love to righteousness therein, as well as his infinite bounty. And while he considered death under the notion of a punishment threatened against sin, he saw God's infinite hatred of iniquity therein, as well as his impartial justice. And when he saw how God loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and beheld his infinite goodness on the one hand, and impartial justice on the other, he was ravished. Now, he saw plainly what God was, and his infinite glory in being such, and loved him with all his heart. It was natural to account such a God infinitely amiable, and it was natural to love him with all his heart; all was genuine and free, resulting from the native temper of his mind.

These being his views and apprehensions, and this his nature, hence, although he was under a covenant of works, yet the hopes of happiness and the fears of misery were not the origi-

nal and first spring of his love to God: it was not originally from self-love, and for self-ends, but from a sense of the beauty of the divine nature; and so it was not forced and hypocritical, but free and genuine: it did not feel like a burden, but it was esteemed a privilege; and instead of being disposed to think it much to love God with all his heart, and obey him in every thing, he rather thought it infinitely right and fit, as being God's due, and that he deserved no thanks from God, but rather was under infinite obligations to give thanks to God forever for such an infinite privilege. And thus we see wherein that moral image of God consisted in which Adam was created.

2. From all which, it is a plain matter of fact, that we are born into the world entirely destitute of the moral image of God; so certain as that the moral image of God radically consists in such a temper, and makes it natural to have such-like views and dispositions; so certain we are in fact born without it. Look into children, and there is nothing to be seen of these things. And we are all sure that such a temper and such-like views and dispositions are not natural to us; yea, most men are sure there is still no such thing in them, and very many believe there is no such thing in the world. We are, in fact, born like the wild ass's colt, as senseless of God, and as void and destitute of grace: we have nature, but no grace; a taste for natural good, but no relish for moral beauty; an appetite for happiness, but no appetite for holiness; a heart easily affected and governed by selfish considerations, but blind to the moral rectitude and fitness of things. And so we have a heart to love ourselves, but no heart to love God; and may be moved to act by selfish views, but cannot be influenced by the infinite moral beauty of the divine nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and will only mind and relish things which suit its nature, but is blind to spiritual things. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) True, indeed, in children there are many natural excellencies; many things pleasing and agreeable. In a good mood, they appear loving and kind, innocent and harmless, humble and meek; and so does a lamb. There is nothing but nature in these appearances; it is owing to their animal constitution, and to their being pleased and humored. It is all from no higher principle than self-love. Cross them, and they will presently feel and act bad enough. They have, in their temper and most early conduct, no regard to God or duty, or to the reason and nature of things, but are moved and affected merely as things please or displease them, making their happiness their last end. And, indeed, if the image of God, holiness, or grace, or whatever we call it, be really such a thing as has been said,

then nothing of such a nature can possibly be more plain and evident than this universally is, that mankind are, in fact, born into the world destitute, entirely destitute thereof. (Job xi. 12.) And hence we must be born again.

Obj. But where, then, was the propriety of Christ's saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"? Is it not here supposed that little children are patterns of humility and goodness?

Ans. And where was the propriety of those words in Isaiah liii. 7, where the prophet, speaking of Christ's meekness and patience under his sufferings, says, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth"? Is it not here supposed that sheep are patterns of meekness and patience? The truth is, that these allusions do not prove that either sheep or little children naturally have any real humility or meekness, of a gracious nature, but only an appearance of it; and just of the same nature are those phrases, "as wise as serpents, as harmless as doves." But as these Scriptures do not prove that sheep, and serpents, and doves, have grace, so neither does that other text prove that little children naturally have it.

3. By comparing ourselves with the holy law of God, as it has been already explained, we may also learn that we are born into the world, not only destitute of a conformity to the law, but that we are natively diametrically opposed to it in the temper of our hearts. The law requires us to love God supremely, but the native bent of our hearts is to love ourselves supremely. The law requires us to live to God ultimately, but the native bent of our hearts is to live to ourselves ultimately. The law requires us to delight in God superlatively, but the native bent of our hearts is to delight in that which is not God, wholly. And, finally, the law requires us to love our neighbors as ourselves, but the native bent of our hearts is to be inordinately selfish.

These are the earliest dispositions that are discovered in our nature: and although I do not think that they are concreated by God together with the essence of our souls, yet they seem to be the very first propensities of the new-made soul. So that they are, in a sense, connatural; our whole hearts are perfectly and entirely bent this way, from their very first motion. These propensities, perhaps, in some sense, may be said to be contracted, in opposition to their being strictly and philosophically natural, because they are not created by God with the essence of the soul, but result from its native choice,

or rather, more strictly, are themselves its native choice. But most certainly these propensities are not contracted in the sense that many vicious habits are, namely, by long use and custom. In opposition to such vicious habits, they may be called connatural. Little children do very early bad things, and contract bad dispositions; but these propensities are evidently antecedent to every bad thing infused or instilled by evil examples, or gotten by practice, or occasioned by temptations. And hence it is become customary to call them natural, and to say that it is our very nature to be so inclined: and to say that these propensities are natural, would to common people be the most apt way of expressing the thing; but it ought to be remembered that they are not natural in the same sense as the faculties of our souls are; for they are not the workmanship of God, but are our native choice, and the voluntary, free, spontaneous bent of their hearts. And to keep up this distinction, I frequently choose to use the word *native*, instead of *natural*.

And now, that these dispositions are, as it were, thus born with us, is as evident from experience as any thing of this kind can be; for these are the earliest dispositions that man's nature discovers, and are evidently discovered before little children are capable of learning them from others. Yea, it is plainly the very native bent of their hearts to love themselves above all; to make their ease, comfort, and happiness, their last end and their all, and to seek for all from the creature, or, in other words, from that which is not God. This is plain to every one's observation; nor did I ever hear any one, as I remember, venture to deny it.

And as children grow up, and their natural powers enlarge, so these propensities grow up, and strengthen, and become more active, and discover themselves plainer; and from this root, this evil fountain, many bad things soon proceed. Observe children through all the days of childhood, and this nature may be easily seen in them; they discover it in all their conduct in ten thousand instances; and there it does and will remain. We may break them of many bad tricks which they learn, and bad habits which they contract; but we cannot change this principle of their nature. They are disposed to love themselves supremely, seek their own ends ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly; nor can we turn this bent of their hearts. We can, after a sort, instil good principles into them, learn them to read and pray; and, after a sort, to honor their parents, and love their neighbors; we can make them civil, and sober, and humble, and modest,

and religious, in a sort, but still their old nature remains in its full power. It is restrained, but not altered at all; yea, and, after all, these their native dispositions have the entire government of them; their whole hearts are as much bent this way as ever; and these propensities govern them in their inward temper, and in all their conduct. They do all from self-love, and for self-ends, and are seeking happiness, not in God, but in something else. These things are plain to every impartial observer; nor can they be denied by any. Thus "we are all shapen in iniquity, and in sin are we conceived; and we are transgressors from the womb, and go astray as soon as we are born."

And if we leave children, and look into ourselves, we may easily observe that we are naturally of the same temper; inclined to love ourselves supremely, and do all from self-love, and for self-ends, and seek for happiness, not in God, but in something else. We can remember when and how we contracted many other vicious habits, and feel some inward power to get rid of them; but these propensities we have always had, and they are natural, and our whole hearts are so in them, that it is not in us so much as sincerely to desire to be otherwise. It is true, we may, in a sort, desire and try to alter this our nature, from considerations of duty, of heaven and hell; but it is all hypocrisy, for we still act merely from self-love, and for self-ends, as much as ever. We have naturally no disposition to desire to love God, only for self-ends; all men are conscious to themselves that this is true.

We are naturally entirely under the government of these dispositions, in all things, and under all circumstances. In all things — in all our civil and religious concerns. It is merely from self-love, and for self-ends, that natural men follow their worldly business, and endeavor to live peaceably with their neighbors; and, in these things, they are seeking blessedness. And it is merely from self-love, and for self-ends, they do any thing in religion; either they mean to be seen of men, or are moved from a slavish fear of hell and mercenary hope of heaven, or from some other selfish consideration. And, *under all circumstances*, we are naturally under the government of these dispositions. In prosperity, then, from an inclination to love ourselves supremely, seek our own happiness ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly, it is our nature to rejoice and be glad; and, from the same inclination, we are disposed to mourn, and murmur, and be discontented under adversity. At the Red Sea, it was natural for the Israelites to sing praises; at the bitter waters, it

was as natural to murmur. When we are pleased, then we are glad; when we are crossed, then we are sad; but, naturally, we do not care how it goes with God's interest in the world; what becomes of his great name, or whether his honor sinks or swims; no, there is but here and there a Moses that cares any thing about this; but, if they can have their own wills, and secure their own interests, they are content. While the Spirit of God lets sinners alone, and they live secure and unconcerned, then, from the aforesaid propensities, they are after the world; one after one thing, and another after another; and, although they may keep up a form of religion for fashion sake, yet, really, they care nothing about God and things eternal. When they come to be awakened to a concern for their souls, though they reform their lives, and take very different courses from what they used to do, yet still all is from the same principle, and for the same end. They have new lives, but the same nature. They do not really care for God or his glory, any more than they used to do, nor take any content in him; but are only after pardon of sin, and peace of conscience, which, according to their present sensations and apprehensions, they think would make them happy. Sinners do not really seek for blessedness in God himself, but in something they hope to receive from him. And hence, when awakened sinners come to get false comfort; think they are pardoned, and so have peace; or think that Christ loves them, and that they shall go to heaven, and so are filled with joy; as all their joy results from self-love merely, so all they rejoice in is what they think they have received, and what they hope yet to receive; but they do not really care for God himself, whose glory they never saw, any more than they used to do; nor rejoice in him; and hence, ordinarily, having their consciences quieted, they soon go back to the world again for real comfort and blessedness. Or if, after false comfort, they turn enthusiasts, and get to blazing, and wax hotter and hotter, and seem to be full of nothing but love to God, and zeal for his glory, it is visions and dreams, revelations and impulses, a firm persuasion they are the peculiar favorites of Heaven, and the applause of their party, which they live upon and take comfort in, and by which they are animated; and all from self-love, and for self-ends; but, in deed and in truth, they neither know God, nor regard him nor his glory, nor live upon him, nor delight in him, any more than they used to do: and thus, in all things, and under all circumstances, unregenerate men are governed by a disposition to love themselves supremely, live to themselves ultimately, and delight

in that which is not God wholly. And whosoever is well acquainted with mankind may easily see that this is, in fact, the very case, and will naturally be led to make the same observation with the apostle Paul — "All seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

And now, this disposition, which is thus evidently natural to all mankind, is directly contrary to God's holy law, is exceeding sinful, and is the root of all wickedness. First, it is diametrically opposite to God's holy law: for this requires us to love God supremely, and seek his glory ultimately; in direct contrariety whereunto, we are naturally inclined to love ourselves supremely, and live to ourselves ultimately. Again, the law requires us to delight in God superlatively, and choose and live upon him as the only portion of our souls; in direct contrariety whereunto, we are naturally inclined to place our whole hearts upon other things, and live upon them, and take content in them. Finally, the law requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and do as we would be done by; in direct contrariety whereunto, we are naturally inclined to be inordinately selfish, and so not to do as we would be done by. And thus we are all naturally gone out of the way, and, in the temper of our own minds, become corrupt, filthy, and unprofitable, and there is none righteous; no, not one. (Psalm xiv. Rom. iii. 10—19.) We have lost the image of God; we have lost a right temper of mind; we have lost a governing sense of the moral fitness of things; have no eyes to see moral beauty, or hearts to taste and relish the moral excellency of spiritual and divine things. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Hence in God we can see no form nor comeliness, nor in him at all delight; yea, it is natural for it to seem to us as if there was no God. (Psalm xiv. 1.) And now, as though in very deed there were no God for us to be in subjection unto, we set up for ourselves, to make our own interest our last end, and to seek blessedness, not in God, but in something else; and are naturally inclined, without any regard to God's law, to make our own wills our only rule; and now, having cast off the government of God, and forsaken the fountain of living waters, we go every one his way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, all serving divers lusts and pleasures. So that it might justly be wondered at, how any among mankind should ever have it enter into their hearts to imagine that we are not fallen creatures, universally depraved, when it is, so evidently, a plain matter of fact. I think it can be owing to nothing but men's ignorance of the law, in its spiritual nature, purity, strictness, and extent, and their not comparing them-

selves therewith: and indeed St. Paul tells us that this is the case — "For without the law sin was dead." For did men but rightly apprehend that God is such a one as the law speaks him to be, and that he requires us to be what really he does, they could not possibly but see their native contrariety to God and his holy law. The Israelites of old felt their contrariety to their prophets, and they hated them, and put them to death; and the Pharisees felt their contrariety to Christ and his apostles, and hated them, and put them to death; for they perceived what their prophets, and what Christ and his apostles, were driving at: but yet, all the while, they imagined they loved God, and loved his law, because they neither knew God nor understood his law; and even so it is at this day: if an Arminian, or Pelagian, — for, after all their pretences, they are, by nature, just like the rest of mankind, — did but verily believe God just such a one as the godly man, in fact, sees him to be, he would feel as great a contrariety to him, and enmity against him, as any Calvinist ever supposed there was in natural men. They frame a false image of God in their own fancies, to suit the vitiated taste of their corrupt hearts, and then cry, "We are not enemies to God; no, but it is natural for us to love him:" when all the while their native aversion to God will not so much as suffer them to believe that there is any such being as really he is. But to proceed: —

The aforesaid disposition, and bent of heart, which is thus directly contrary to the law, is exceedingly sinful. For while we love ourselves supremely, and live to ourselves ultimately, we do really, in our hearts, and by our practice, prefer ourselves above God, as if we were more excellent and worthy; in which we cast infinite contempt on the Lord of glory, inasmuch as all the nations are, in his sight, but as a drop of the bucket, and small dust of the balance, and we, compared with him, are less than nothing, and vanity. He is of infinite majesty, greatness, glory, and excellency, and all heaven adore him in the most humble prostrations; and yet we, mean worms of the dust, yea, vile worms of the dust, that deserve every moment to be spurned to hell, even we esteem and love ourselves more than we do him, and are more concerned for our interest than for his honor; yea, care not at all for him, or his honor, nor would ever so much as pretend to it, if not excited thereto from the expectation of self-advantage; and that, even although we receive life and breath, and all things from him, and his right to us is original, underived, perfect, and entire. Surely this is infinite wickedness;

and besides, in being and doing so, we affront his sacred authority, whereby, as Governor of the world, he commands us to love him with all our hearts. And further, while we are inclined to take our whole delight in that which is not God; to forsake him, the fountain of living waters, the ocean of all good, and seek comfort and content elsewhere; we hereby prefer the world above God, prefer our wives and children; our houses, and lands, and pleasures, above God — or, at best, we prefer (an imaginary) heaven above God: to do either of which casts infinite contempt upon the Lord of glory, the delight of angels, the joy of the heavenly world. The Psalmist said, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is nothing on earth I desire besides thee." And well might he say so: but to be inclined, when we are seccure in sin, and not terrified with hell, to love and desire any thing upon earth more than God; and, when under terrors and fearful expectations of wrath, to desire pardon, peace, and (an imaginary) heaven, and any thing to make us happy, but God himself, is surely infinitely vile. We do hereby prefer that which is not God above God himself, as if it was really of more worth; and so cast infinite contempt upon the ocean of blessedness and fountain of all good. And besides, in this, as well as the former particular, we go directly contrary to the express command of the great Governor of the whole world. Finally, to be disposed to an inordinate, (and so to a groundless) self-love, and to be swallowed up in selfish views and designs, instead of a tender love and cordial benevolence to all our fellow-men, loving them as ourselves, is evidently contrary to all the reason and nature of things, and to the express command of God, which is infinitely binding; and so this also is infinitely sinful. And thus these, our native propensities, are directly contrary to the holy law of God, and exceedingly sinful.

But here it may be inquired, "If a disposition to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and to delight in that which is not God wholly, be so exceedingly sinful, whence is it that men's consciences do not any more accuse and condemn them therefor?" To which the answer is plain and easy; for this is evidently owing to their intolerably mean thoughts of God. "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if, then, I be a father, where is mine honor? And if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name: and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar;" (and so ye despise me:) "and"

(yet) "ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?" (I answer,) "In that" (in doing so) "ye" (practically) "say, the Table of the Lord is contemptible;" (and so you treat me with contempt.) And yet their consciences did not smite them, and therefore the Lord adds, "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil?" (or, Am I so mean and contemptible, that to do so ought not to be looked upon as an affront? I appeal to the common sense of mankind.) "Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts;" (and if your governor will take it as an affront, much more may I,) "for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts." Here it is plain that it was their mean and contemptuous thoughts of God which made them think it would do to turn him off any how, and with any thing; and just so it is in the case before us: men's thoughts of God are infinitely mean; he is very contemptible in their sight; and hence, although they love themselves, their own honor and interest, above the Lord and his glory, and prefer other things, and take more delight in that which is not God, than in God himself, yet they say, "Wherein do we despise the Lord, affront his majesty, or cast contempt upon him? We pray in secret and in our families; we go to meeting and to sacrament, and help to support the gospel; and is not all this to honor the Lord? And wherein do we despise him?" Just as if going into your closet twice a day, to quiet your conscience, and saying over the old prayer, by rote, in your family, that you have repeated morning and evening ever since you kept house; and, in a customary way, going to meeting and to sacrament, and paying your minister's rate, (and, it may be, not without grudging,) just as if this was an honoring of God, when, at heart, you do not love him one jot, nor care for his honor and interest at all, nor would do any thing in religion but for the influence of education and common custom, or from legal fears and mercenary hopes, or merely from some other selfish consideration; yea, just as if this was an honoring of God, when, all the time, you cast such infinite contempt upon him in your heart, as to give your heart to another; to that which is not God; to yourself, and to the world! Let a woman treat her husband so; will he be pleased with it, and will he accept her person? If she does not love her husband at all or delight in his person, or care for his interest; if she loves another man; has a separate interest of her own, and does nothing for her husband but to serve her own views, will he now think she is a good wife, because morning, noon, and night, she prepares his food, though she does it carelessly, the victuals

always cold, and poorly dressed, hardly fit to eat; and he knows it is all from want of love? And besides, she thinks she does a great deal for him, and expects her pay, like a hired maid! and she says to her husband, "Wherein do I despise you? Am not I always doing for you?" And she does not feel herself to blame, because her husband looks so mean and contemptible in her eyes; and she cares so little for him, that any thing seems good enough for him, while, all the time, her adulterous heart is doting on her lovers. "You do not love me," says her husband, "but other men have your heart, and you are more a wife to them than to me." But says she, "I cannot love you, and I cannot but love others;" and now she seems to herself not to blame. So, a wicked world have such mean thoughts of God, that they cannot love him at all, and have such high thoughts of themselves, that they cannot but love themselves supremely; they have such mean thoughts of God that they cannot delight in him at all; but they see a glory in other things, and so in them they cannot but delight wholly. And because they are habitually insensible of God's infinite glory, hence they are habitually insensible of the exceeding sinfulness of these native propensities of their hearts. So that we see that mean, contemptuous thoughts of God are the very foundation of the peace, and quiet, and security of men, in a mere form of religion. If they did but see who the Lord is, they could not but judge themselves and all their duties to be infinitely odious in his sight. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God." Men have such mean thoughts of God, and so little regard him, that they are naturally inclined to forget that there is a God, and to feel and act as if there were none. Hence, "The fool saith in his heart, There is no God;" that is, he is inclined to feel and act as if there was none; and therefore it is added, in the next words, "corrupt are they." So, the children of Eli, who treated the worship of God with great contempt, are said to despise the Lord, and kick at his sacrifice; and yet their consciences did not smite them: and the ground of all was, their mean, contemptuous thoughts of God. "The sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." And thus we see that our native disposition to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and delight wholly in that which is not God, is, (whether we are sensible of it or not) directly contrary to God's holy law, and exceedingly sinful. And I add,—

This native bent of our hearts is the root of all sin, — the positive root, I mean, in opposition to a mere privative cause, — of all our inward corruptions and vicious practices; both of those which are contrary to the first and to the second table of the law; of those which more immediately affront God, and of those which more especially respect our neighbor.

From this root arises all our evil carriage towards the Lord of glory. This is the root of a spirit of self-supremacy, whereby we, in our hearts, exalt ourselves and our wills above the Lord and his will, and refuse to be controlled by him, or be in subjection unto him. Jehovah assumes the character of most high God, supreme Lord, and sovereign Governor of the whole world, and commands all the earth to acknowledge and obey him as such; but we are all naturally inclined, Pharaoh-like, to say, "Who is the Lord, that we should obey him? We know not the Lord, nor will we do his will." And hence mankind, all the world over, break God's law every day before his face; as if they despised his authority in their hearts. And when he crosses them in his providences, they, as though it was not his right to govern the world, quarrel with him, because they cannot have their own wills, and go in their own ways. This was always the way of the children of Israel, those forty years in the wilderness, whose whole conduct exemplifies our nature to the life, and in which glass we may behold our faces, and know what manner of persons we naturally are. Men love themselves above God, and do not like his law, and hence are inclined to set up their wills above and against his; and if they can they will have their wills, and go in their ways, for all him; and if they cannot, they will quarrel with him. And hence the apostle says, "their carnal mind is enmity against God; is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be." And from this root arises a spirit of self-sufficiency and independence, whereby we are lifted up in our own hearts, and hate to be beholden to God; and, having different interests and ends from him, naturally think it not safe, and so, upon the whole, not liking to trust in him, choose to trust in ourselves, or any thing rather than him. We have a better thought of ourselves than of God, as knowing we are disposed to be true to our own interests and ends, and therefore had rather trust in ourselves than in him; and besides, we naturally hate to come upon our knees to him for every thing. Hence that in Jer. ii. 31 is the native language of our hearts: "We are lords, we will come no more unto thee." We love to have the staff in our own hands, for then we can do as we will; and hate to lie at God's mercy, for then we must be at his control; yea, we had rather trust in

any thing than in God, he being, of all things, most contrary to us. And hence the Israelites in their distress, would one while make a covenant with Assyria, and then lean upon Egypt; yea, and rob the treasures of the temple to hire their aid, rather than be beholden to God. Yea, they would make them gods of silver and gold, of wood and stone, and then trust in such lying vanities, rather than in the Lord Jehovah. "And as face answers to face in the water, so does the heart of man to man." This is our very nature.

Again, from the same root arises a disposition to depart from the Lord; for other things appear more glorious, and excellent, and soul-satisfying than God; wherefore the hearts of the children of men secretly loathe the Lord, and hanker after other things, and so go away from God to them. "They take the trimbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." "It is in vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? We call the proud happy." Meditation and prayer are a burden to men; they had rather be almost any where than in their closets, because they secretly loathe the Lord; but in other things they find comfort; one in his farm, and another in his merchandise; the young man in his frolics, and with his merry companions; the old man in his wife and children, and cattle, and swine, and house, and lands; the rich man in his riches; the ambitious man in his honors; the scholar in his books; the man of contemplation in his nice speculations; and, in any thing, men can take more comfort than in God himself. That which angels and saints in heaven, and believers on earth, prize above all things, men have naturally the least account of. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nothing on earth I desire besides thee." "Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and become vain? Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

And, from the whole, we may see there is the greatest contrariety between the nature of God and the nature of the sinner; and hence God hates sinners, and sinners hate him; and when sinners come to die, and go into the eternal world, they will feel then that they hate him, though their nature then will be

just the same as it is now; and they will then know that the great reason they did not feel their hatred of him in this world, was because they did not think nor would believe that he was such a one.

And hence we may see whence it is that we are so averse to right apprehensions of God, and whence it is that our insensibility of his glory, in being what he is, is so invincible, viz., because he is, in his very nature, in such perfect contrariety to us, and we to him; for to account that infinitely glorious in being what it is, which is of a nature perfectly contrary to us, is as unnatural as to account ourselves infinitely hateful in being what we are; for that necessarily implies this. So far, therefore, as sinners love themselves for being what they are, so far do they hate God for being what he is; and so far as they hate God for being what he is, so far their insensibility of his infinite glory, in being just such a one, is invincible. And now, since men naturally perfectly love themselves for being what they are, and consequently perfectly hate God for being what he is, hence their minds are, naturally, perfectly prejudiced against the true knowledge of God, and perfectly averse from, and unsusceptible of a sense of, his infinite glory in being just what he is. And hence it is, that neither God's word nor works, nor any thing but his almighty spirit, can make men, in their hearts, both really give into it that God is just such an one as he is, and infinitely glorious in being such. The heavens may declare the glory of the Lord, and make the invisible things of God clearly to be seen; and the Scriptures and ministers may proclaim his greatness and glory, and the honor of his majesty; but sinners, in seeing, will not see, and in hearing, will not hear and understand, for they do not like to have God in their knowledge. They hate the light, and love darkness; they hate to think that God should be such a one; can see no glory in him in being such; secretly wish he was another kind of a being; dread to think that he is what he is, and will not, if they can help it. That God should love himself more than he does his sinful creatures, and value his own honor and interest more than he does our happiness, and look upon it as an infinite affront that we are not exactly of the same mind, and judge us worthy of eternal damnation therefor; and, as high Governor of the world, make such a law, and bind us to it to do so; how can this suit a proud rebel, that only loves himself and his own interest, and cares not for God at all? How can a carnal, selfish heart delight in such a God, and account him infinitely glorious in being such? How can he rejoice to hear that he sits King forever, and does all things according to the counsel of his own

will, aiming ultimately at his own glory? Or how can he imagine that such a conduct, so directly cross to his temper, is infinitely right and becoming, glorious and excellent? The temper, the bad temper of sinners hearts is that which renders their insensibility of God's glory, in being what he is, so invincible. He does not suit them; he does not look upon things as they do; he is not disposed, nor does he act as they would have him, but all directly contrary; as contrary as light and darkness; as sin and holiness; as heaven and hell: therefore the carnal mind is enmity against God. But to return:—

From this same root—this disposition to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly—proceeds all our evil carriage towards our neighbor. Pride, selfishness, and worldliness, lay the foundation for all that cheating, lying, backbiting, quarrelling, there is among neighbors; and for all the feuds and bloody wars there ever have been among all the nations of the earth, from the beginning of the world. And pride, selfishness, and worldliness, together with that enmity against God and true religion, which is naturally concomitant, lay the foundation for all those bloody persecutions which have been, in the several ages of the world, against the church and people of God. If men were not proud nor selfish, they would have no inclination to injure their neighbors, in name or estate. If they took their supreme delight in God as the portion of their souls, they would not have any of their little petty idols to quarrel and contend about: if they loved their neighbors as themselves, there would never more be any thing like persecution; and all injuries and abuses would cease from the earth. So that, to conclude, as a disposition to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, is an habitual conformity to the whole law, and lays a solid foundation for a right carriage towards God and our neighbor, in all things, so a disposition to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly, is an habitual contrariety to the whole law, and lays a sad foundation for all evil carriage towards God and our fellowmen. And, as I said, this disposition is natural to us, and we are naturally entirely under the government of it; and so the seed and root of all sin is in us, even in the native temper of our hearts. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

Obj. But if mankind neither love God nor their neighbors with a genuine love, such as the law requires, but naturally have, and are entirely under the government of, a spirit of contrariety to the whole law, whence is it that all men do not

blaspheme God, and do all the mischielf they can, and, in practice as well as in nature, be as bad as devils?

Ans. Because of the restraints, which God, for wise ends and purposes, is pleased to lay upon them, whereby their nature is, indeed, not at all altered, but only, in a measure, kept from breaking out, as otherwise it would do. And these restraints, in ordinary, are such as arise from these things: First. From their animal constitution; whereby many are inclined to be tender-hearted, compassionate, and kind, without any regard to God or duty, from a sort of natural instinct, much of the same nature, to all appearance, as is to be found in many in the brutal world. Secondly. From natural affection; whereby, partly from animal nature, and partly from self-love, and from being brought up together, relatives have a certain fondness for one another, and so are disposed to be kind to one another, and that without any regard to God or duty; much as it is with many in the brutal world. Thirdly. From a good education; whereby many are influenced to be civil in their behavior, honest in their dealings, kind to the poor, and to pray in their families, and join with the church, etc., though destitute of grace in their hearts. Fourthly. From worldly considerations; whereby, from self-love, in order to avoid punishment from men, or from fear of disgrace and reproach, or to get the good will of others, or promote some worldly interest, men are influenced, sometimes, to carry themselves externally very well. Fifthly. From religious considerations; whereby, from self-love, the fear of hell, and the hope of heaven, many are influenced to do much in religion. Sixthly. Want of speculative knowledge of God; ignorance of his resolution to punish sin, and of his anger against them, is also an occasion of their not blaspheming his name; as they will do, as soon as ever they come into eternity, and see how things really are; though then their nature will be exactly the same that it is now. God gives rain and fruitful seasons, and fills the hearts of all with food and gladness; he makes his sun rise, and rain fall upon the evil and unthankful, and offers salvation in case they repent and believe; whence men are ready to think that God loves them, and this restrains them. These, and such like things, restrain men's corruptions; but for which they would be as bad in this world as they will be in the next, when these restraints come to be taken off.

To what has been said may also be added, that God, by these three methods, does much to restrain many. First. By his providence; whereby he many times brings remarkable

judgments upon men for their sins; and remarkably prospers men, as to the things of this world, who are true to their word, and honest in their dealings; — and hereby men are afraid to be and do as bad as otherwise they would, lest some judgment should come upon them; and others are influenced to be honest, and to carry themselves, externally, well, in hopes of a worldly blessing. Secondly. By his word, his written word, and his word preached; whereby men are made more sensible that there is a heaven and a hell, and so are the more restrained and kept in awe. Thirdly. By his Spirit: whereby he does much to make many a man sensible of the evil of sin, the dreadfulness of damnation, and the glory of heaven, whom he never sanctifies; whereby they are not only restrained from vicious practices, but their corruptions also are greatly stunned, and they made zealous promoters of religion. And thus the supreme Governor of the world restrains men's corruptions, and maintains some degree of order among his rebellious subjects.

But yet, all these restraints notwithstanding, there is, and always has been, abundance of wickedness committed in this apostate world. They have murdered God's servants, the prophets, whom the Lord has sent unto them, rising early and sending; and they have killed his Son, and his apostles, and shed the blood of thousands and millions of his saints; so great has been their aversion to God, and so great their cruelty. And by the many wars there have been among the nations, from the beginning, the whole earth has been filled with blood. And by cheating, and lying, and backbiting, and contention, hateful and hating one another, innumerable injuries have been done to, and unspeakable miseries brought upon, one another. And as soon as ever mankind have their restraints taken off at death, without having any sin infused into their nature, they will appear to be what they are; they will feel and act like very devils.

But in the mean while, by means of these restraints, many deceive themselves; for our corruptions being thus capable of being restrained, and, as it were, stunned, and our lives of being pretty well regulated, to appearance, while our nature remains the same, and we feeling ourselves able to do considerable towards this; hence many are deceived, and take this to be real religion, and think they did, and that others may convert themselves, with but comparatively little assistance from God's Spirit. And truly so they might, if this was true religion, and conversion consisted in thus reforming our lives and restraining our corruptions. But, in conversion, our very

nature must be changed, (2 Cor. v. 17,) the native bent of our hearts must be turned, (Ezek. xxxvi. 26,) and from this we are naturally wholly averse. And hence arises the absolute necessity of a supernatural, irresistible grace, in order to our conversion; of which more afterwards. But to return: —

From what has been said, we see that we are natively disposed to love ourselves supremely, to live to ourselves ultimately, and delight in that which is not God, wholly; and that this disposition, by which we are naturally entirely governed, in all things, and under all circumstances, is in direct contrariety to the holy law of God, and is exceedingly sinful, and is the root of all sin; of all our evil carriage towards God and man, in heart and life. So that, as to have a disposition to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves, is a radical conformity to the whole law; so this contrary disposition is a radical contrariety to the whole law. Well, therefore, may the Holy Scriptures speak of sinners as being "dead in sin," and "at enmity against God," and, "by nature, children of wrath," and represent them so frequently as being "enemies to God," — since, by comparing ourselves with the holy law of God, we are found to be in fact, natively so, in the temper of our minds. And it will be forever in vain for mankind to plead not guilty, since the law of God is what it is, and we are what we are; for by the law, by which is the knowledge of sin, we evidently stand condemned.

Here it may be objected, "that we are, natively, no otherwise than God makes us; and if, therefore, we are natively sinful, God made us so; and, by consequence, is the author of sin." But this objection has been already obviated; for, as has been observed, God only creates the naked essence of our souls; our natural faculties; a power to think and will, and to love and hate; and this evil bent of our hearts is not of his making, but is the spontaneous propensity of our own wills; for we, being born devoid of the divine image, ignorant of God, and insensible of his glory, do, of our own accord, turn to ourselves, and the things of time and sense, and to any thing that suits a graceless heart, and there all our affections centre; from whence we natively become averse to God, and to all that which is spiritually good, and inclined to all sin. So that the positive corruption of our nature is not any thing created by God, but arises merely from a privative cause.

Here it will be objected again, "that it is not consistent with the divine perfections to bring mankind into the world under such sad and unhappy circumstances." "But who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing

formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou formed me thus? It is blasphemous to say, that it is not consistent with the divine perfections to do what God, in fact, does. It is a plain matter of fact, that we are born into the world devoid of the divine image, ignorant of God, insensible of his infinite glory. And it is a plain matter of fact, that, in consequence hereof, we are natively disposed to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and delight in that which is not God, wholly. And it is plain to a demonstration, that this temper is in direct contrariety to God's holy law; is exceedingly sinful, and is the root of all wickedness. Now, to say it is not consistent with the divine perfections that mankind should be brought into the world, as, in fact, they are, is wickedly to fly in the face of our almighty Creator, and expressly charge him with unrighteousness; which, surely, does not become us. If we cannot see into this dispensation of divine providence, yet we ought to remember, that God is "holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works," and that "the judge of all the earth always does right." I do not mean that things are therefore right, merely because God does them; for if they were not right to be done, antecedently to his doing of them, he would not, he could not do them. But I mean, that when it is a plain matter of fact, that God does such a thing, we may thence conclude that it is most certainly right for him to do so, although we cannot understand how it is. We ought to remember that he is infinite in his understanding, and, at one comprehensive view, beholds all things, and so cannot but know what is right, and what is wrong, in all cases; and his judgment is unbiased; the rectitude of his nature is perfect; he cannot, therefore, but do right always, and, in all instances, govern the world in righteousness. But our minds are narrow and contracted; we are but of yesterday, and know nothing; and besides, our judgments are biased through our mean thoughts of God and high thoughts of ourselves; and hence we may be easily mistaken; especially in this case, our minds are sadly biased, and it is almost impossible for us to consider the matter with a spirit of disinterested impartiality. And these considerations ought to check our rising thoughts, and make us lie down in the dust before the great, and righteous, and good governor of the world, with humble silence, even although we cannot understand his ways. And I believe that an humble disposition of heart would lay an effectual foundation for us to come to be satisfied in this matter; it being our mean thoughts of God, and high thoughts of ourselves, which blind our minds that we cannot see, and disposes us to quarrel with

our creator, and find fault with the ruler and disposer of the world. It is true that the Holy Scriptures consider mankind as being what they are, and say but little about the way in which they came to be in such a condition; and there is good reason for it; for it is of infinitely greater importance that we should know what a condition we are in, than how we came into it; and it is a foolish thing for us, and contrary to common sense, to lay the blame any where but upon ourselves, since we are voluntarily such as we are, and really love to be what we are; do not sincerely desire to be otherwise, but are utterly averse from it. But yet the Holy Scriptures say so much about the way of our coming into our present condition, as might fully satisfy our minds, were not our judgments biased; for from them we learn, that man was made upright; was created in God's image, and, by rebelling against his Maker, brought a curse upon himself and all his race. (Gen. i. 27. Eccles. vii. 29. Rom. v. 12, 19.) There we read, that by one man, sin entered into the world; that by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; that by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Adam was created in the image of God; it was connatural to him to love God with all his heart, and this would have been our case, had he not rebelled against God; but now we are born devoid of the divine image, have no heart for God, are transgressors from the womb; by nature children of wrath.

And if any should inquire, "But can it be right that Adam's sin should have any influence upon us?"

I answer, It is a plain case that it actually has, and we may depend upon it, that the Judge of all the earth always does right. And besides, why might not God make Adam our public head and representative, to act in our room, as he has since, for our recovery, made his own Son our public head and representative? (Rom. v. 12—21.) He had as much right, power, and authority, for one as for the other; and was not Adam as likely to remain obedient as any of us should have been, and, in some respects, more likely? His natural powers were ripe; he stood not only for himself, but for all his race; a whole world lay at stake; and if he had kept the covenant of his God, and secured happiness to all his race, should we not forever have blessed God for so good a constitution? Never once should we have questioned God's right and authority to make him our public head and representative, or have thought that it did not become his wisdom and goodness to trust our all in his hands. And if we should thus have approved this constitution, had Adam never sinned, why might we not as justly approve

it now, if we would be but disinterestedly impartial? It is the same, in itself, now, that it would have been then; every way as holy, just, and good. "O, but for God to damn a whole world for one sin!" But stay; does not this arise from mean thoughts of God, and high thoughts of yourself? O, think who the Lord is! and what it is for a worm to rise in rebellion against him! and how he treated whole thousands of glorious angels for their first sin! and then, think how God drowned the old world, burnt Sodom, and of the dreadful things he intends to do to the impenitent at the day of judgment! and learn, and believe, that sin is an infinitely greater evil than we naturally imagine.

But I must return to my subject, for it is not my present business so much to show how we came into this condition, as plainly to point out what that condition is, which we are actually in. As to this, the whole Scriptures are very. plain; but especially the law, by which is the knowledge of sin, clearly discovers what our case is, and, beyond dispute, proves that all are under sin. And having already, by comparing ourselves with the law, found out what our nature is, I proceed to make some further observations, in which I design greater brevity.

4. From what has been said, we may learn that the very best religious performances of all unregenerate men are, complexly considered, sinful, and so, odious in the sight of God. They may do many things materially good, but the principle, end, and manner of them are such, as that, complexly considered, what they do is sin in the sight of God. For "sin is a transgression of the law." But,

(1.) The law requires all mankind to do every duty out of love to God, and for his glory; but all unregenerate persons, directly contrary to law, do every duty merely out of love to themselves, and for self-ends; and so are guilty of rebellion.

(2.) The law requires all mankind to do every duty out of love to God, and for his glory; but all unregenerate persons do every duty merely out of love to themselves, and for self-ends; whereby they prefer themselves, and their interest, above God and his glory; and so, are guilty of spiritual idolatry.

(3.) The law requires all mankind to do every duty from love to God, and for his glory: but all unregenerate persons do every duty merely from self-love, and for self-ends; and yet hypocritically pretend to God, that they love and obey him; and so are guilty of mocking God.

(4.) The law supposes that God infinitely deserves to be loved with all our hearts, and obeyed in every thing, and that our neighbor deserves to be loved as ourselves; and that, there-

fore, if we should yield perfect obedience in all things, yet we should deserve no thanks: but all unregenerate persons make much of their duties, though such miserable, poor things; and so affront God to his very face.

Upon these four accounts, their very best performances are done in a manner directly contrary to the law of God, and so are sinful, and therefore odious in the sight of God. "As is the tree, so is the fruit; as is the fountain, so are the streams; and as is the man, so are his doings, in the sight of God, who looks at the heart, and judges not according to appearances, but judges righteous judgment; and with whom many things, that are highly esteemed among men, are abomination."

And if their best religious performances are thus odious in the sight of God, it is certain that they cannot possibly, in the nature of things, have the least tendency to make amends for their past sins, or recommend them to the divine favor; but rather tend to provoke God still more. So that it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. Nor is there the least hope, in the sinner's case, but what arises from the sovereign mercy of God; whereby he can "have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and have compassion on whom he will have compassion."

True, some, being ignorant of the law, and of our entire contrariety to it, have fancied a goodness in the sinner's duties; and hence have persuaded themselves that there are promises of special grace made to them. Not that there are any promises in Scripture of that nature; for the Scripture every where considers us as being, while unregenerate, "dead in sin," "enemies to God," yea, "enmity against him," and so far from any true and acceptable obedience to God, as that we are not, nor can be, subject to the law, and so cannot please God, (Rom. viii. 7, 8,) and every where represents such as being under the wrath of God; the curse of the law, and a present condemnation. But the real ground of their opinion is, their ignorance of the sinner's sinful, guilty circumstances, and their fond conceit that there is some real goodness in what the sinner does: both which are owing to their ignorance of the law,* and of the nature of true holiness. (Rom. vii. 8, 9; x. 3.) All will own, that if

* It is manifest that this notion of the promises, of which Pelagius was the author, and which was condemned for heresy above 1300 years ago, did with him, and does with his followers, take its rise, originally, from their ignorance of the nature and meaning of the moral law. But yet some good men may have been inadvertently led into this error by the force of education. I believe men's hearts may be sometimes better than their heads; but when a false scheme of religion does perfectly suit a man's heart, and express the temper of his mind, then, no doubt, he is graceless. The above notion of the promises perfectly suits a self-righteous heart.

sinners' duties are such as I have represented, it is absurd, and even inconsistent with the divine perfections, that promises of special grace should be made to them.

It is true they refer to Matt. xxv. 29: "To him that hath, shall be given." But that text evidently speaks of the final rewards which shall be given to the godly at the day of judgment; when all the unregenerate shall, with the slothful servant, be cast into outer darkness. They quote also Matt. vii. 7: "Ask and ye shall receive," etc. But the condition of this promise was never yet performed by an unregenerate sinner. For this asking is meant right asking; for those who ask amiss, receive nothing. Right asking of grace, supposes right desires of it; but the unregenerate are, in the habitual temper of their hearts, directly contrary to grace and all spiritual good, and entirely so, as has been proved. But to have genuine desires after a thing, and a perfect contrariety to it, in the whole heart, at the same time, is an express contradiction. The reason that sinners many times think that they love holiness, and desire heartily and sincerely to be made holy, is, that they, being ignorant of the nature of true holiness, have framed a false image of it in their own fancies. Did they but distinctly know the very thing itself, their native contrariety to it could no longer be hid. (Rom. vii. 8, 9.) So the Pharisees thought they loved God, and loved his law; although, at the same time, they perfectly hated the Son of God, who was the express image of his Father, and came into the world to do honor to his Father's law. They had wrong notions of God, and of his law.

Obj. But this tends to drive sinners to despair.

Ans. Only to despair of being saved by their own righteousness, which they must be driven to, or they will never submit to be saved by free grace through Jesus Christ. (Rom. vii. 8, 9; x. 3.)

Obj. But if these things be true, there is not any motive to excite a poor sinner to reform, or pray, or read, or do any thing.

Ans. By which it is plain, that a sinner cares not a jot for God, and will not go one step in religion, only for what he can get; and if such a sinner had ever so many motives, he would only serve himself, but not serve God at all. And what encouragement can God, consistent with his honor, give to such a one, since he merits hell every moment, even by his best duties, but only that which St. Peter gave to Simon Magus? "Repent and pray to God if peradventure the wickedness of thy heart may be forgiven thee."

Obj. But this way of reasoning will make sinners leave off seeking and striving, and sit down discouraged.

Ans. Not if sinners are but effectually awakened to see how dreadful damnation is; for a bare *who can tell?* will make such resolve to run, and fight, and strive, and beg, and pray, till they die; and if they perish to perish at God's foot: and as for others, all their courage arises from their not seeing what wretched, miserable, sinful, guilty creatures they are; and so must be dashed to pieces, sooner or later, in this world or the next, whenever their eyes come to be opened. And if God ever, in this world, shows them what they are, they will thereby perceive what danger they are in; and now a mere *who can tell?* will make them also resolve to run for eternal salvation, till their very last breath. It is best that false confidence should be killed; and this way of reasoning does not, in the least, tend to hurt any other. It is best that sinners should know the worst of their case; and this way of reasoning does not tend to make it appear a jot worse than it is.

Obj. But what good does it do for sinners to be in such earnest to reform, read, watch, pray, run, fight, strive, as for their lives, since all they do is sin, and God will have mercy only on whom he will have mercy?

Ans. (1.) It is less sin to do these things, than not to do them.

(2.) Sinners never will be in such earnest, only when God comes to awaken and convince, and so to make them effectually sensible of the dreadful state they are in; and it is not any discouragements that can keep them from being in such earnest then, so long as the least hope appears in their case. Other people care but little about eternal things, and do but very little in religion, but what education, custom, the fashion, and their worldly interest, excite them unto. Most people think it so easy a thing to be saved, as that they look upon such great concern and earnestness as perfect frenzy.

(3.) This great earnestness of awakened sinners makes them try their strength to purpose; whereby they come to be experimentally convinced that it is not in their hearts to love God, be sorry for sin, or do any thing that is good; whereby the high conceit they used to have of their ability and good nature is brought down, and they feel and find that they are enemies to God, and dead in sin; and hereby a foundation is laid for them to see the justice of God in their damnation, and so the reasonableness of God's having mercy only on whom he will have mercy. And thus the law, though it cannot give life, yet is a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ; and thus the main good the awakened sinner gets, by going to this schoolmaster is effectually to learn his need of Christ,

and of the free grace of God through him. (Rom. vii. 8, 9. Gal. iii.. 21—24.) This is the great end God has in view, and this end all the sinner's earnest strivings are well calculated to obtain.

5. From what has been said, we may learn the nature of a saving conversion, and the manner wherein it is wrought. Conversion consists in our being recovered, from our present sinfulness, to the moral image of God; or, which is the same thing, to a real conformity to the moral law; but a conformity to the moral law consists in a disposition to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively; and to love our neighbor as ourselves; and a practice agreeable thereto. And therefore conversion consists in our being recovered from what we are by nature, to such a disposition and practice.

And now, in order to such a glorious renovation and recovery, God by his Spirit sets home the law upon the sinner's heart, causing him to see and feel, to purpose, just how he has lived, and what he is, and what he deserves, and how he is in the hands of a sovereign God, and at his disposal; whereby the hinderances which were in the way of his conversion, are, in a sort, removed. "For without the law, sin was dead: for I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." And then "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in the heart, and gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." And now a sense of the glory of God and divine things being thus imparted to the soul by the Spirit of God, and the sinner being raised up from spiritual death to spiritual life, does return home to God through Jesus Christ, venturing his soul and immortal concerns upon the free grace of God, and through him gives up himself to God, to be his forever, to love him supremely, live to him entirely, and delight in him superlatively, and forever to walk in all his ways; and hereby, at the same time, the man's heart begins to be habitually framed to love his neighbor as himself, with a disinterested impartiality; and thus an effectual foundation is laid for universal external obedience, and that from genuine principles.

And as the divine life is thus begun, so it is carried on in the soul much after the same manner. The Spirit of God shows the believer, more and more, what a poor, sinful, hell-deserving wretch he is in himself, and so makes him more and more sensible of his absolute need of free grace, through Jesus Christ, to pardon and to sanctify him. He grows in a

sense of these things all his days; whereby his heart is kept humble, and Christ and free grace made more precious. The Spirit of God shows the believer more and more of the infinite glory and excellency of God, whereby he is more and more influenced to love him, live to him, and delight in him with all his heart; and, by the whole, his heart is framed more and more to love his neighbor as himself: and thus "the path of the just is like a shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day;" only it must be observed, that the Spirit's operations, after conversion, are attended with two differences, arising from two causes. First. From the different state of the subject wrought upon. The believer, not being under the law as a covenant, is not, by the Spirit, filled with those legal terrors arising from the fears of hell, as heretofore he was, (Rom. viii. 15,) but only is made sensible of his remaining sinfulness, and the sinfulness and desert of sin, and of God's fatherly displeasure; and hereby his heart is humbled and broken. Indeed, hereby he is many times filled with unspeakable anguish and bitterness of soul. "His sins are ever before his eyes, and his bones wax old through his roaring all the day long." (Psalm xxiii. 3; li. 3.) "He is troubled; he is bowed down greatly; he goes mourning all the day long." (Psalm xxxviii. 1—6.) But these awakening, convincing, humbling, mourning, purifying times, always end in peace, and joy, and rest in God; attended with a greater degree of tenderness of conscience and holy watchfulness, and followed with bringing forth more fruit. (Psalm xcvii. 11; cxxvi. 5, 6; xxxii. 5; lxxiii. 25, 28. John xv. 2. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Heb. xii. 11. Hos. ii. 6, 7, 14, 15.) Secondly. From the different nature of the subject wrought upon. The believer not being under the full power of sin, and at perfect enmity against God, as once he was, hence does not resist the Spirit with the whole heart, while he takes down the power of sin, as heretofore he did; but has a genuine disposition to join in on God's side, and say, "Let me be effectually weaned from the world, and humbled, and made holy and heavenly, and be brought into an entire subjection to God in all things, though by means and methods ever so cross to flesh and blood; let me be stripped naked of all worldly comforts, and let Shimei curse, and all outward evils and inward anguish of heart come upon me, if nothing else will do. Here, Lord, I am in thy hands; chasten, correct, do what thou wilt with me, only let sin die; sin, thine enemy, the worst evil, and the greatest burden of my soul." (Rom. vii. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9, 16. James i. 2. Psalm cxix. 71. Heb. xii. 9.) And he is not

only thus willing that God should, by any methods, take down the power of sin in the heart, but also joins in with the methods of divine grace, and, by watching and praying, and by fighting and striving, seeks the death of every corruption; and from his thus joining in on God's side against the flesh, he is said, in Scripture, to crucify it, and to work out his own salvation.

From what has been said under this head, we may see that a saving conversion differs very much from the conversion of these four sorts of men. First. The worldly hypocrite; who makes a profession of religion, does many things, appears zealous, and pretends to be a good man, merely from worldly considerations, and to be seen of men. (Matt. xxiii. 5.) Secondly. The legal hypocrite; whose conversion is nothing else but a leaving off his vicious practices, and turning to be strict and conscientious in external duties, in hopes thereby to make amends for his past sins, and recommend himself to God; and so escape hell, and get to heaven. (Rom. x. 3.) Thirdly. The evangelical hypocrite; whose conversion was nothing else but this; he was awakened to see his sins, and terrified with fear of hell, and humbled, in a measure, but not thoroughly; but great light broke into his mind, and now he believes that Christ loves him, and has pardoned all his sins, and so is filled with joy and zeal, and is become quite another man; but still has no grace. (Matt. xiii. 20. Heb. vi. 4. 2 Pet. ii. 20.) These usually either fall away to carnal security, or, being puffed up with pride, turn enthusiasts. Fourthly. The wild, blazing enthusiast; whose conversion all arises from imaginary notions. He has an imaginary sight of his sin, his heart, the wrath of God, of hell, and the devil, and is terribly distressed; and then he sees Christ in a bodily shape, it may be on the cross with his blood running, or seated on a throne of glory at his Father's right hand; he sees a great light shining all around him; hears the angels sing; sees visions, hears voices; has revelations, and thinks himself one of the very best saints in the whole world, though, in truth, he, by scandalous practices, or heretical principles, or both, soon appears to be seven times more a child of the devil than he was before. However, in his own conceit, he knows infallibly that he is right, and all the world cannot convince him to the contrary. Yea, he is fit at once to be a minister, though ignorant of the first principles of religion; he is inspired by God, and whoever likes him not is an enemy to Jesus Christ, he doubts not at all. These are the tares the devil sows, by means of whom the ways of God are evil spoken of. (Matt. xiii. 39. 2 Cor. xi. 14. 1 Tim. i. 7.)

Now, these several sorts of religion, the true and the false, growing up from these several roots, do all receive a different nourishment, according to their different nature; through which nourishment they grow and increase; and through the want of which they decay. The good man, the greater sense he has of God's infinite glory, as he has revealed himself in the law and in the gospel, so, proportionably, does his religion flourish and grow in all its various branches, and shine with a heavenly lustre. The worldly hypocrite lays out himself most in religion, when there are the most to observe and applaud him. The legal hypocrite, when his conscience is most terrified with the thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity. And the evangelical hypocrite has his affections raised, his love, and joy, and zeal, in proportion to his supposed discoveries of the love of Christ to him in particular, and sense of the glories of a fancied heaven. And, finally, the blazing enthusiast is more or less lively in religion according as he has dreams, hears voices, has impressions and revelations, and is applauded by his party. And, accordingly, those different sorts of religion will grow and thrive the best under such different sorts of preaching as suits their several natures. And men will cry up those ministers most, whose preaching and conduct agree with their hearts the best. "For all people will walk, every one in the name of his God;" and true believers "will walk in the name of the Lord their God."

6. From all that has been said, we may learn that a sinner is naturally disposed to resist the Spirit of God with all his might, when he comes to awaken, convince, and humble him; to take down the power of sin in his heart, and turn him to God. Conversion consists in our being recovered from the sinful state we are in, by nature, to a real conformity to the divine law; that is, in our being recovered from a disposition to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly, and a practice agreeable to this disposition; to a disposition to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively, and to love our neighbors as ourselves; and a practice agreeable thereto; that is, in other words, in our being recovered from one disposition, to another directly contrary to it; even so contrary, that the first must die, in order to the other's existence. This disposition, from which we are to be recovered, is not any habit contracted merely by custom, which might more easily be parted with; but it is connatural to us; a disposition rooted, as it were, in our very nature, and which has the full possession of our souls, and the entire government of

our hearts; in a word, a disposition which we in every respect perfectly love, and which we perfectly hate should be ever crossed, and which yet must be slain, or we never converted. Now, if ever a sinner be recovered from this disposition, it is evident it must be against the very grain of his heart; his heart, therefore, will make the utmost resistance it possibly can.

If we were entirely renewed in an instant, without any previous strivings of the Spirit, then, indeed, there would be no room nor time for resistance; but, otherwise, the heart will resist. If there were the least disposition in our hearts, contrary to our natural disposition to love ourselves supremely, live to ourselves ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly, it might join in on God's side; be sincerely desirous that God would slay the enmity of our hearts; but there is not. The carnal mind is wholly enmity against God; is not subject to his law, nor can be; and so the whole heart will make resistance. If the disposition, to which we are recovered in conversion were not so directly contrary to our natural disposition, as that our natural disposition must be slain in order to the very being of that, the sinner's opposition might not be so great; but, when all that is within him is directly crossed and going to be killed, all that is within him will oppose and resist, till slain. We are, by nature, wholly in the flesh, and after the flesh. According to a Scripture phrase, that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and, by conversion, we are to become spirit — that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. But the flesh and the spirit are, in Scripture, represented as being contrary the one to the other. Will flesh, then, of its own accord, become spirit? No, surely; for the flesh lusteth against the spirit; that is, wholly averse from it, and set against it; so that there is no other way but for the flesh to be crucified, with the affections and lusts; but the flesh perfectly hates this death, and therefore will resist with all its might. (Rom. viii. 7, 8. John iii. 6. Gal. v. 17. Rom. vi. 6.)

As the truth of this point is thus evident, from the reason and nature of things, so it is further confirmed from constant experience; for, let any man read the Bible with attention, and he may plainly see that the very thing which God has always been aiming at, in all the external means he has used with his professing people, in every age of the world, has been to recover them to a conformity to his holy law in heart and life; that is, to recover them from a disposition to love themselves supremely, live to themselves ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly, and a practice agreeable there-

unto, to a disposition to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively, and to love their neighbors as themselves, and to practise accordingly; for on these two commands hang all the law and the prophets. And we may also plainly see, that God's professing people have always manifested the greatest aversion to hearken to the law and to the prophets, and so to die to themselves, the world, and sin; and thus to give up themselves to God, to love him, live to him, delight in him, and walk in all his ways. God sent all his servants, the prophets, to the children of Israel, rising early and sending; but they always hated their words, and so stopped their ears, and refused to obey; yea, they fell into a rage at them, and, in their rage, they mocked them; they scourged them; they bound them; they imprisoned them; they stoned them; they sawed them asunder, and made the rest wander about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented. And when God sent his well-beloved Son to call a wicked world to return home unto him, they said, "Come, let us kill him." And when Christ sent his apostles to carry the glad tidings of pardon and peace to the ends of the earth, and call all men to repent and be converted, to return, and love, and serve the living God, both Jews and Gentiles conspired together against them, and killed them; just as the ten tribes killed the messenger whom Rehoboam sent unto them, to call and invite them to return to their former allegiance. (1 Kings xii. 18.) Therefore, says our blessed Savior to the Jews, who pretended great love to God and to the law, and mightily to honor their prophets, "You are like whited sepulchres; you appear outwardly righteous, but inwardly are full of all hypocrisy and wickedness. Your fathers killed the prophets, whom you pretend to honor, but you are full as bad as they were. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, etc. Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" From all which, nothing can be plainer, than that this rebellious God-hating world always have been set against a return to God, and been disposed to do all they could to render all means ineffectual. Well might St. Stephen, therefore, say unto the Jews as he did, "Ye stiff-

necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye;" nor had they any reason to be angry with him therefor. And as all who have enjoyed the external means of grace have thus been disposed to hate the light, shut their eyes, stop their ears, and refuse to hear, and been utterly opposed to a return to God; so this is evidently the case with all whom God has inwardly wrought upon by his Spirit; as all know, who have either had any experience themselves, or have candidly observed the experience of others. And, indeed, it must be so; for the very same temper which will make men resist the outward, will also dispose them to resist the inward means of grace. For the Holy Spirit teaches and urges the very same things that Moses and the prophets, and Christ and his apostles, teach and urge, and pursues the same end; and will, therefore, of consequence, meet with the same opposition and resistance, from the very same quarter. "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. He that doth evil hateth the light." That light which will discover men's evil deeds, and show them their fallen, sinful, guilty, helpless, undone condition, and so spoil all their worldly, carnal comforts, the very idols of their hearts, and also kill their legal, self-righteous hopes, which is all the awakened and concerned sinner has, to his own sense and apprehension, to depend upon; that light which affects things which are so directly cross to the inward temper of the sinner's heart, he will naturally be disposed to hate, shut his eyes against, flee from, and resist with all his might; and that whether it comes from the external teachings of the word, or internal teachings of the Spirit; yea, so long as there is the least remainder of corruption left in believers themselves, it will hate to die, and struggle with all its might to keep its ground; yea, and to recover its former dominion. "I see another law in my members, warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Yea, it implies a contradiction to suppose corruption can in any case be willing to die; for every temper in our hearts naturally loves to be gratified and pleased, and it is a contradiction to suppose it can, at the same time, be willing to be crossed and killed. (Gal. v. 17.)

Obj. But do not awakened sinners earnestly desire to repent of and be humble for their sins, and to mortify their corruptions, and to give up themselves to God, to love and live to him? And do they not earnestly pray for the divine Spirit to

assist them so to do? How can they then be disposed, at the same time, to make such mighty resistance?

Ans. First. Awakened sinners see themselves in great danger, and they therefore earnestly desire and seek after self-preservation; and this is plainly owing to nature, and not to any grace or goodness in their hearts. "Through the greatness of thy power, thine enemies submit themselves unto thee;" that is, they feign a submission, but they are thine enemies. Secondly. That which moves them to desire to repent, be humbled, etc., is, they hope by these means to make amends for their past sins, and ingratiate themselves into the favor of God, (Rom. x. 3;) that is, merely from self-love, with pure hypocrisy, they would impose upon God. For, Thirdly, after all their pretences, desires, and prayers, their nature and temper is just what it used to be; and were they but delivered from the fears of hell, and left at full liberty to follow their own inclinations, they would live as viciously as ever they did. Fourthly. Yet they pretend to love God, and would fain have him believe them sincere, and are ready to expect acceptance for what they do, and to think it hard if God should not accept them. Now, if it was the work of the Spirit of God to build up such a sinner in this hypocritical, self-righteous way, he might be disposed, while under his fears and terrors, to concur and fall in with the Spirit's influence; and all merely from self-love and for self-ends. But if the Spirit of God goes about to bring home the law in its strictness, and show such a sinner the very truth, that he does not love God, nor desire to; that his desires, and prayers, and tears, are all hypocritical; that he is still dead in sin, and an enemy to God; that he deserves to be damned as much as ever he did; that God is at liberty, all his duties notwithstanding, to reject him; that he lies absolutely at God's mercy; now he will hate the light, shut his eyes against it, quarrel at it, and resist it with all his might. It is exceedingly hard for the poor sinner, when he begins to be awakened, to part with a vain life, and vain companions, his carnal ease and comfort, and all vicious courses, to make restitution to those he has wronged in name or estate, and give himself to reading, meditation, and prayer, and to a serious, mortifying way of living: he cannot bear the thought; would fain contrive an easier way, or else delay, for the present, so mournful and tedious a work. But when, by the dreadful fears of hell and eternal damnation, he has been brought, after much reluctance and unwillingness, to a forced consent to all this, hoping thereby to appease the divine wrath, and procure the divine favor; now, to have all his self-righteous hopes dashed and confounded, by a sight of the badness of his heart, by see-

ing he has no love to God, no sorrow for sin, no inclination to be holy, but averse to God and all that is good, and that all his forced goodness has no virtue in it; that he is yet under the whole guilt of all his sin; under condemnation of the law and the wrath of God; dead in sin, an enemy to God, absolutely at God's mercy; this, this, I say, is dreadful indeed, and far more cross to the very grain of the sinner's heart, than all he ever met with before. Here, therefore, there will be the greatest struggle, and strongest resistance, before ever the sinner can, by the Spirit of God, be brought clearly to see and give in to these things; for all these things are directly cross to the sinner's disposition to love himself supremely, and live to himself ultimately; directly cross to a spirit of self-supremacy and independence. The sinner cannot bear that God should be so great and so sovereign, and himself so vile; so little, so absolutely at his mercy; it is a *killing* thing — "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." So that it is plain, that notwithstanding all the awakened sinner's selfish desires and prayers, yet, in the habitual temper of his heart, he stands disposed to resist the influences of the divine Spirit with all his might. He is so far from being willing to repent of his sins, that he is utterly unwilling to see and own his sinfulness; so far from desiring to be humbled, that he is by no means willing to see the cause and reason he has to be humbled; so far from desiring to be made spiritually alive, that he will not so much as own that he is spiritually dead; so far from desiring the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit to reconcile him to God, that he will not own that he is an enemy to God; but would fain think that he heartily desires to love God, and stands ready to hate and resist that light, which would discover the enmity of his heart. "He that doeth evil, hateth the light," and flees from it, "lest his evil deeds be discovered;" and, for the same reason, he that hath an evil heart, hates the light and resists it, lest the badness of his heart be discovered.

7. From all that has been said, we may learn that those influences of the Spirit, which will be sufficient effectually to awaken, convince, and humble the sinner, and recover him to God, must be irresistible and supernatural. That the internal influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary to recover sinners to God, is so plainly held forth every where in the Bible, that the Arminians themselves do not deny it; but how much and what kind of influences are needful, is very much disputed. Now, so much and such sort of influences are, beyond dispute, needful, as will be sufficient effectually to answer the end, and without which no sinner will ever be converted. This is self-

evident. If sinners were so good-natured as to see, and feel, and own their sinfulness, and the justice of the sentence whereby they stand condemned, and die to themselves, the world, and sin, and return home to God, through Jesus Christ; to love him, live to him, and delight in him forever of their own accord, merely upon reading the Bible, and hearing the law and the gospel preached, then there would be no need of any inward influences of the Spirit at all; or, if they were so good natured as to be easily persuaded to do so, then some small degree of the inward influences of the Spirit would do. But if, in the first place, they are altogether unwilling to see, and feel, and own their sin and guilt, and the justice of their condemnation according to law, and entirely disposed to hate and resist the light, as hath but just now been proved, then they must be brought to it by an all-conquering, irresistible grace, or not at all. And if, in the second place, the clearest sight and greatest sense a natural man can have of what God is, instead of making him appear infinitely glorious and amiable in the eyes of one whose heart is dead in sin, and diametrically opposite to the divine nature, will rather irritate corruption, and make the native enmity of the heart ferment and rage, and become but the more apparent and sensible, as has been heretofore proved, then there must be a supernatural, spiritual, and divine change wrought in the heart, by the immediate influences of the Spirit of God, whereby it shall become natural to look upon God as infinitely glorious and amiable in being what he is, and so a foundation hereby laid for us to love him with all our hearts, and so sincerely to repent, return, and give up ourselves to him, to live to him, and delight in him forever: I say, if these things be so, there must be such a change wrought by the Spirit of God, or not one sinner in the world will ever be converted to God; and, therefore, that there is an absolute necessity of such influences of the Spirit of God, in order to a saving conversion, is evident, to a demonstration, from the very reason and nature of things. God himself must take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh, and write his law on our hearts; raise us from the dead; create us anew; open our eyes, etc., according to the language of Scripture. And these things God does do for all that are renewed, and therefore they are said to be born of God; to be born of the Spirit; to be spiritual; to be made partakers of the divine nature, etc., and God is said to give faith, repentance, and every divine grace. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Heb. viii. 10. Eph. ii. 1—10. 1 Cor. iv. 6. John i. 13, and iii. 6. Rom. viii. 6, 9. 2 Pet. i. 4. Acts v. 31. James i. 17.)

8. From what has been said, we may learn to understand the doctrine of divine sovereignty in the bestowment of special grace for the regeneration and conversion of sinners. The Scripture represents God as choosing some before the foundation of the world, to be holy and to be his children; and teaches us that whom he did predestinate, them he also calls, and whom he calls, them he also justifies, and whom he justifies, them he also glorifies; and plainly intimates that such as are given to Christ, and ordained to eternal life, believe, and none other. And the Scriptures teach us that "God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion;" and that, for the most part, he passes by the rich, and great, and honorable, and chooses the meanest and most ignoble, that no flesh might glory in his presence. He hides the gospel from the wise and prudent, and reveals it to babes; and that because it pleases him so to do, and Christ rejoices in his sovereign pleasure herein, as displaying his infinite wisdom.

And now, what has been said may show us the infinite reasonableness of such a procedure; for God, whose eyes run to and fro through all the earth, seeing all things as being what they are, plainly beholds and views the state and temper of this apostate world; and let men pretend what they will, he knows their hearts; he knows they do not love him, nor care for him; he sees all their hypocrisy, and their inward contrariety to him and his law, and how much they are settled in their temper; so far from repentance, that they will not so much as see their sin, but stand to justify themselves, insensible of their guilt, and insensible of their desert, hating the light. He sees they hate to perceive their sin, and guilt, and desert, and to be humbled, and lie down at his foot, and be absolutely beholden to him; and that they would make the utmost resistance if he should take them in hand, and go about thoroughly to convince them, by his Spirit, how things really are. Thus he views his apostate, rebellious creatures, and sees how sinful, how dead in sin, how contrary to all good, and how irreclaimable they are, and, upon the whole, how much they deserve eternal damnation. In the days of eternity, he saw just how things would be beforehand; and now, in time, he sees just how things actually are. In the days of eternity, therefore, he saw that there would not be any thing in them to move him to have mercy on any; and now, in time, he finds it to be the case; and yet he was pleased, then, of his mere sovereign pleasure, to determine not to cast off all, but to save some: so, now, he is pleased to put his sovereign pleasure in execution; and he has mercy on whom

he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion, and many times takes the meanest and vilest, that the sovereignty of his grace might be the more illustrious, and the pride of all flesh might be brought low, and the Lord alone be exalted. And surely such a conduct infinitely well becomes the supreme Governor of the whole world.

Indeed, if any of Adam's race were so well disposed, as, of their own accord, merely upon reading the Bible, hearing the gospel preached, and enjoying the common means of grace, to believe and repent, and to return home to God through Jesus Christ, they might be accepted, pardoned, and saved; nor would there be any room for, or need of, sovereign grace. But God, who knows the hearts of all, sees that all the pretences of sinners that way are but mere hypocrisy, and that at heart they are his enemies, and utterly opposed to a return. Or, if there was any virtue to be found among any of the fallen race of Adam, antecedent to God's grace, this might move him to have mercy upon one, rather than another. But he sees that all are entirely destitute of love to him, and entirely at enmity against him, wholly void of real goodness, and dead in sin, and that the only reason why some are not so outwardly extravagant and vicious as others, is, because he has, by one means and another, restrained them, and not because they are really better. And while God thus beholds all alike dead in sin; and, in the temper of their hearts, by nature equally averse to a return to him, and views all as guilty and hell-deserving, there is nothing, there can be nothing, to move him to determine to show mercy to one, rather than another, but his own good pleasure; and therefore he has mercy on whom he will have mercy; he awakens, convinces, humbles, converts, whom he pleases, and leaves the rest to follow their own inclinations, and take their own course, enduring, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath.

Let it be here noted, that many of those warm disputes about the doctrine of divine sovereignty, which have filled the Christian world, turn very much upon this point. All are agreed, that whosoever believes, repents, and returns to God, through Jesus Christ, shall be saved. All will, therefore, yield that, if mankind in general were so well disposed as to return to God, through Jesus Christ, of their own accord, upon the calls and invitations of the gospel, and only by the influence and help of those advantages which are common, then all might be saved; nor would there be any need of, or room for, this sovereign, distinguishing grace. But if mankind have none of this disposition, but are every way diametrically opposite thereto; if

all the calls of the gospel, and common means and methods of grace, will have no effectual influence upon them; if nothing but an almighty, all-conquering grace can stop them in their course of rebellion, subdue their lusts, and recover them to God; if this be the case of all mankind, then it is plain that nothing but the mere mercy of God can interpose and prevent a universal ruin. And it is plain, that the sovereign Governor of the whole world is, in the nature of things, at most perfect liberty to show this mercy to none, or to some few, or to all, just as it seems good in his sight; and since, from eternity, he foresaw just how things would be, from eternity he might determine what to do. So that the great question is, whether mankind are naturally so entirely averse to a true conversion. For if they are, the reasonableness of the divine sovereignty must be admitted in this case; and if they are not, none will any longer plead for it: and what the natural opposition of mankind to conversion is, may be easily seen, if we consider what the true nature of conversion is, and compare their temper herewith. And what the true nature of conversion is, may be easily known by considering the true nature of the moral law. In a word, if the law does only require what the Arminians and Pelagians suppose, and religion be just such a thing, it is a plain case that mankind are not so bad, nor do they need such an irresistible grace. But if the law requires quite another sort of holiness, and so true religion be quite another sort of thing, even such as I have described, which lies so diametrically opposite to the natural bent and bias of our whole souls, it is a clear case that grace must be irresistible, and can proceed from nothing but mere free mercy, nor result from any thing but the sovereign pleasure of the Most High. So that, in short, the whole dispute is resolved into this question: What does the law of God require, and wherein does a genuine conformity thereto consist? But of this, more afterwards.

And from what has been said, we may easily gather a plain and short answer to all the mighty cry about promises, promises to the unconverted, if they will do as well as they can; for it is plain heaven's gates stand wide open to all that believe and repent, and return to God, through Jesus Christ. (John iii. 16.) And it is plain the wrath of God is revealed against all who do not do this. (John iii. 36.) And it is plain that there is nothing but the want of a good temper, together with the obstinate perverseness of sinners, that hinders their return to God; and that, therefore, all their pretences of being willing to do as well as they can, are mere hypocrisy. They are so unwilling to return to God, or take one step that way, that they can be

brought back by nothing short of an Almighty power; and are so far, therefore, from being entitled to the promises of the gospel, that they are actually, and that deservedly too, under condemnation by the gospel, (John iii. 18,) and under all the curses of the law. (Gal. iii. 10.) "Take heed, therefore, O sinner, thou enemy of God, when you pretend that you desire to repent and do as well as you can, that you be not found quieting yourself in a state of estrangement from God, hiding your natural aversion to God and holiness under fair pretences. And know it, if you do, though you may deceive yourself by the means, yet it will appear, another day, before all worlds, and it will be known that you were an enemy to God, and would not be reconciled, and did but flatter him with your lips, and lie unto him with your tongue, in all your seemingly devout pretences. You think yourself good enough to have an interest in the promises, but infinite goodness judges you deserve to be numbered among the children of wrath and heirs of hell. Your high conceit of your own goodness is the foundation of all your confidence, and both join to keep you secure in sin and under guilt, and insensible of your need of Christ and sovereign grace." (Luke v. 31. Rom. x. 3.) Did sinners but see the badness of their hearts, they would be soon convinced that the promises are not theirs, but the threatenings; and would feel and know that they have no claims to make, but lie absolutely at mercy. (Luke xviii. 13.)

9. And if it is nothing but the mere grace and sovereign good pleasure of God, which moves him to stop sinners in their career to hell, and by his irresistible and all-conquering grace, and by the supernatural influences of his Holy Spirit, snbdue their stubbornness, take down the power of sin in their hearts, and recover them to himself; and if he does this for them, when they are at enmity against him, and are his open enemies by wicked works, and so are altogether deserving his wrath and vengeance; I say, if this be the case, there is all reason to think that he who thus begins, will carry on the work to perfection. He knew how bad the sinner was when he first took him in hand; how he hated to be converted, and how he would resist, and that his own Almighty arm must bring salvation; and yet this did not discourage his first undertaking. And he knew how the sinner would prove after conversion; just how barren and unfruitful; just how perverse and rebellious, and just how apt to forget God and turn away from him, and that his own almighty grace must always be working in him to will and to do. He knew all the dis-

couraging circumstances beforehand, and his infinite goodness surmounted them all; and he had mercy on the poor sinner, because he would have mercy on him, of his mere good pleasure, from his boundless grace, aiming at the glory of his own great name. (Eph. i. 6.) And now this being the case, we have all reason to think that God will never alter his hand, or leave unfinished the work which he has begun; for there always will be the same motive from which he undertook the work, to excite him to carry it on; even the infinite goodness of his nature; and he will be always under the same advantages to answer the end he at first proposed, namely, the advancement of the glory of his grace. And he will never meet with any unforeseen difficulties or discouragements in his way. We may, therefore, be pretty certain, if really God begins this work under such views and such circumstances, that it is with design to carry it on, as Samuel reasons in a parallel case: "For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people." So that, if the doctrine of the saints' perseverance were not expressly taught in Scripture, yet on this ground we might argue very strongly for it. But that this is a doctrine plainly revealed in the gospel, we may learn from Matt. xiii. 23; John iv. 14, x. 4, 5, 27, 28; 1 John iii. 6, 9; Heb. viii. 10, etc. When St. Paul kept under his body, and brought it into subjection, lest he should be a castaway, he did no otherwise than he was wont to do in temporal concerns, in cases wherein he was, beforehand, certain of the event. So he sent word to the chief captain of the Jews, lying in wait to kill him, lest he should be murdered by them; although it was revealed to him from God, but the very night before, that he should live to see Rome. (Acts xxiii. 12—21.) So he would not allow the sailors to leave the ship in the midst of the storm, lest they should some of them be drowned for want of their help; although, but a little before, it was revealed to him from God, that not one of them should be drowned. (Acts xxvii. 23—31.) And, indeed, it was his duty to do as he did, as much as if he had been at the greatest uncertainties about the event. So, although Paul knew that never any thing should separate him from the love of God, yet he used all possible endeavors to mortify his corruptions, lest he should be a castaway. And, indeed, it was his duty to do so, as much as if he had been at the greatest uncertainties about the event. And what was his duty was also the duty of all good men; and therefore St. Paul, in his epistles, is frequently exhorting all to do as he did; and that

in a perfect consistency with the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, which he also teaches. And as Paul's being certain of the event did not tend to make him careless in the use of proper means to save his natural life, but rather tended to encourage and animate him, as knowing that he should finally succeed, so his being certain of the event did not tend to make him careless, but to animate him, with respect to his spiritual and eternal life. And as it was with him, so it is with all good men. (Rom. vi. 2.) For this is always the case, that certainty of success animates men, if the thing they are about be what they love, and what their hearts are engaged in; but to die to themselves, the world, and sin, and love God, and live to him, and grow up into perfect holiness, is what all believers love, and have their hearts engaged after: an absolute certainty, therefore, of perseverance has, in the nature of things, the greatest tendency to animate them to the most sprightly activity. There are none but graceless hypocrites that take encouragement from the doctrines of free grace to carelessness and sin. (Rom. vi. 1, 2.)

10. If this be the nature of a saving conversion; if this be the nature of true holiness; if this be true religion, so contrary to flesh and blood, and all the habitual propensities of nature, then, so long as there is the least corruption left in the heart, there will, of necessity, be a continual conflict; grace will continually seek the ruin of sin, through its contrariety to it, and hatred of it; and sin will strive to maintain its ground; yea, and to regain its former dominion. The gracious nature delights in the law of God, and aspires after sinless perfection; the sinful nature hates the law of God, and strives to lead the man captive into sin. The gracious nature is a disposition to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively; and this sinful nature is a disposition to love self supremely, live to self ultimately, and delight in that which is not God wholly; and because these two are contrary the one to the other, therefore "the flesh will lust against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." The gracious nature joins in on God's side against all sin; and while God "works in the man to will and to do, he works out his own salvation with fear and trembling;" with caution and circumspection; with watchfulness and holy concern; laboring to die to himself, the world, and sin, and be wholly the Lord's. While the divine Spirit is breathing upon his heart, and realizing to him the being and perfections of God; the existence and importance of divine and eternal things, and is spreading divine light over his soul, and is banishing selfish and worldly

views, and is drawing his soul to holy and divine contemplations, he feels the divine influence; he blesses the Lord; he summons all within him to engagedness; he pants after God. "O that I might know him, that I might see him in his infinite glory! 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' 'My soul followeth hard after thee.' 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee.' O that I could, with my whole heart, love thee forever, live to thee forever, live upon thee forever, and never, never depart from thee! O that I could think for thee, and speak for thee, and act for thee; at home and abroad, by day and by night, always live to thee, and upon thee! Here, Lord, I give myself to thee, to be forever thine; to love thee, and to fear thee, and to walk in all thy ways, and keep all thy commands; and O that my heart might never depart from thee! But, alas! alas! to will is present with me; to have a disposition to all this, and long for all this, and seek and strive for all this, is easy and natural, for I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but how to perform I find not; how to get my whole heart so to fall in, as that there shall not be the least contrary temper, this is quite beyond me, 'for I am still carnal, sold under sin, have another law in my members,' have still the remains of the flesh — of my native contrariety to God, and disposition to disrelish divine things; and so am apt to forget God, to warp off from him, and to have selfish and worldly views and designs secretly creep into my mind, and steal away my heart from God; and so am daily led into captivity. O that sin was entirely dead! that a disposition to disrelish God, to forget him, to go away from him, to live without him, and to seek content in that which is not God, was entirely slain! O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me!"

If grace and corruption were not so contrary the one to the other, so diametrically opposite, there might possibly be an accommodation between them, and both quietly dwell together in the same heart; but now they are set for each other's ruin, and seek each other's destruction; and, like fire and water, will never rest till one or the other be entirely destroyed. (Gal. v. 17.)

If grace could be wholly killed, or corruption wholly slain, then the conflict of believers might wholly cease in this life; but grace is immortal, like a living spring that shall never

dry; like a root that will ever grow; and Christ is always purging believers, that they may bring forth more fruit. So that he that is born of God cannot sin as others do; cannot sin, but against the grain of his heart, the gracious nature continually resisting, (Gal. v. 17;) so that it is certain, from the nature of things, that David and Solomon neither of them felt, in their worst frames, as graceless men do. Grace resisted within, (Gal. v. 17,) hating their proceedings; nor did it cease inwardly to struggle and torment them, till the one cries out, "My bones wax old through my roaring all the day long." For his sin was ever before his eyes. And the other, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Many stony-ground hearers, who were once filled with light and joy, do, when their religion is all worn out, and they lie dead, and blind, and stupid, whole months and years together, cry, "The best are dead sometimes;" and have recourse to David and Solomon: and many a hypocrite, whose religion is only by fits and pangs, sometimes floated, as the streets in summer, by a sudden shower, and then, in a few days, as dry as ever, deceive themselves here; and many take natural conscience to be a principle of grace, and the war between that and their corruptions to be a gracious conflict. But as all counterfeit religions are specifically different from the true, as has been already shown, so, by consequence, their conflict is different from that which believers have, in its very nature. They fight from different principles, and for different ends, and about different things, and in a different manner, just as their religions differ from one another.

11. If this be the nature of conversion and holiness, and the manner wherein they are wrought; and if true religion be thus specifically different from all counterfeits, then may believers be infallibly certain that they have true grace. A man cannot but perceive his own thoughts, and know what views he has, and be intuitively acquainted with his own designs and aims; so every man knows it is with him, as to the things of this world. Much less is it possible that there should be so great a change in a man's heart and life, thoughts, affections, and actions, as there is made by conversion, and yet he know nothing about it. For a man to be awakened, out of a state of security in sin, to see what a sinful, guilty, helpless, lost, undone state he is in, and yet not to perceive any thing of it, evidently implies a contradiction, and so is, in the nature of things, impossible. For a man to be brought to see God in his infinite glory, so as to be disposed to love him supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively, and

yet not to perceive it, that is, not to be conscious of his views and affections, also implies a contradiction, and so is impossible. For a man to lose his selfish and worldly views more and more, from year to year, and die to himself, the world, and sin; and for a man to live a life of communion with God, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, and yet not at all to perceive it, is utterly impossible; for the mind of man is naturally conscious to its own actings. So, from the nature of things, it is evident that grace is perceptible; yea, in its own nature, it must be as perceptible as corruption; love to God as love to the world; sorrow for sin as sorrow for affliction; aiming at God's glory as aiming at our own honor and interest. But if true grace be, in its own nature, perceptible, and if it be also specifically different from all counterfeits, it is self-evident that a good man may know that he has true grace. I cannot see why, extraordinary cases excepted, a good man, who lives a life of communion with and devotedness to God, and in the daily exercise of every grace, may not come to know that he has grace. Surely he must be conscious to the actings of his own mind; for this is natural. And surely he may see the difference between his religion and all counterfeits, when the difference is so great and plain; so that, if the Scriptures did not expressly teach us that assurance is attainable, it is yet evidently demonstrable from the nature of things.

But the Scriptures do plainly teach this doctrine. (2 Pet. i. 10. 1 John v. 13. 1 John ii. 3, and iii. 14, etc.) Besides all those promises that are made for the comfort and support of God's people in this world, suppose that they may know that they are the people of God; for, unless a man knows that he is a child of God, he cannot rationally take comfort in those promises which are peculiar to such. It is true, brazen hypocrites will do so, but they act very presumptuously. It is folly and madness for me to flatter myself that God has promised to do so and so for me, unless I know that I am one to whom the promises belong. For instance, it is folly and madness for me to believe that God will make all things work together for my good, according to that promise in Rom. viii. 28, unless I know that I love God; for this promise plainly respects such, and no other. But there are very many precious promises made to believers in the word of God, which are evidently designed for their comfort and support. It is certain, therefore, that God thinks that believers may know they are such; without which knowledge, all these promises cannot attain their end.

Besides, to suppose that to be a servant of God, and a servant of the devil; to be going the way to heaven, and the way to

hell; to be travelling in the narrow way, and to be travelling in the broad way, are so near alike, as that even good men themselves cannot possibly know them asunder, and which way they are going, is, on every account, intolerably absurd; nor could the Christian world have possibly drunk in such a notion, but that true grace is so very rare a thing.

I may here, by the way, just observe these three things: 1. That the way for a man to know that he has grace, is not to try himself by fallible signs, but intuitively to look into himself and see grace. A thousand signs of grace will not prove that a man has grace. There is no sign of grace to be depended upon, but grace itself; for every thing but grace a hypocrite may have; and what grace, holiness, or true religion is, I have already endeavored to show. 2. That the way for a man to know that he has grace, is not to judge himself by the degree and measure of his religious frames and affections, or the height of his attainments, but by the special nature of them; for as there is not any one grace but a hypocrite may have its counterfeit, so hypocrites may rise as high in their religion as any true believer does in his. Was Elijah, the prophet, jealous for the name and worship of the true God, and against false religion? So was Jehu: and he appeared as full of zeal, and more courageous, and did greater exploits. There was scarcely a more zealous saint than Elijah, in Old Testament times; but yet Jehu, that hypocrite, made a much greater show and noise; seemed to be fuller of zeal and courage, and actually did greater exploits, setting aside the miracles which God wrought by Elijah. (1 Kings xviii. xix. 2 Kings ix. x.) And we do not read of one saint in all the Bible that fasted, in a constant way, twice every week, as the Pharisee did. (Luke xviii.) And there is not one saint in all the Bible that ever did, externally and visibly, any higher acts of self-denial, than to give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burnt; and yet St. Paul intimates that a man may do this, and still have no grace in his heart. It is no certain evidence, therefore, that a man is a good man, because he has a great deal of religion; more than the most, and full as much as the best; yea, more than any in all the country; yea, or in all the whole world; for, in Jehu's time, there was not perhaps, for a while, one like him upon the face of the earth. A man, therefore, cannot know that he is a good man by the degree of his religion, but only from the special nature of it. And wherein true religion specifically differs from all counterfeits, I have already shown. 3. Since grace is, in its own nature, perceptible, and specifically different from all counterfeits, there is no need of the

immediate witness of the Spirit, in order to a full assurance. If the Spirit of God does but give us a good degree of grace, and enlighten our minds to understand the Scriptures, and so to know the nature of true grace, we may then perceive that we have grace; and the more grace we have, the more perceptible will it be, and its difference from all counterfeits will be the more plain. And if a believer may know and be certain that he has grace, without the immediate witness of the Spirit, then such a witness is altogether needless, and would be of no advantage; but God never grants his Spirit to believers, to do things needless and to no advantage; and therefore there is no such thing as the immediate witness of the Spirit in this affair. And besides, it is plain the Scriptures every where direct us to look into ourselves, to see whether we love God and keep his commands; to see whether Christ, in his holy nature, be formed in us; to see whether the Spirit, as an enlightener and sanctifier, dwells in us, and influences and governs us; but never once directs us to look for the immediate witness of the Spirit, in order to know whether we have grace.

Obj. But the text says expressly, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii. 16.)

Ans. But the text does not in the least intimate that the Spirit witnesses immediately. The Spirit bears witness; but how? The Spirit makes it evident that we are the children of God; but in what way? By immediate revelation? No: the Scripture nowhere tells us to look for such revelations, or lays down any marks whereby we may know which come from God, and which from the devil. How, then, does the Spirit make it evident that we are the children of God, and by what witness does he make it appear? Not by telling us that we are children; the devil may tell hypocrites so; but by making us children in the very temper of our hearts; by giving to us much of a childlike frame of spirit towards God; a thing the devil cannot do, and so a thing by which we may certainly know. This holy, divine, childlike frame and temper of heart, whereby we bear the very image of our heavenly Father, is God's mark, which more or less conspicuously, he sets upon all the lambs of his flock. This is the "seal of the Spirit." For this is the "earnest of our inheritance." It is "eternal life begun" in the soul. This is called the witness of the Spirit, because it is what the Spirit works in our hearts, and that by which he makes it evident that we are the children of God; the design of witnesses being to make things evident. And, indeed, this is the only distinguishing mark that God puts upon his children, and the

only thing wherein they differ from all hypocrites; and is the only evidence the Scripture directs them to look for and expect, and without which all other evidences are just good for nothing. (Matt. vii. 24—27. John xv. 2. 1 John ii. 3, 4; iii. 6—10.)

And this being the case, we may see how much out of the way those are, who think and say that it is a sin for them to doubt the goodness of their state, because of their badness, and because they can see no grace in their hearts. "For," say they, "that would be to call God's truth and faithfulness into question; who has, by his Spirit, immediately assured me of his love and my salvation; just as if the immutability of his purpose depended upon my good frames. No; I must do as Abraham did, who, "against hope, believed in hope;" so, though I see no grace in my heart, or signs of any, yet I must believe my state is good, and that I shall be saved. It is not my duty to look so much into my own heart; I shall never be the better for that; but I must look to Christ, and believe, and never doubt; for the Spirit of God did, at such a time, assure me of Christ's love to me; and I knew I was not deceived; and it would now be a great sin in me to doubt; it would be giving the lie to Christ and to the Holy Spirit."

How sad a delusion are such poor sinners under, who dare not believe the Holy Scriptures, for fear they shall sin, which every where assure us, that unless we are holy in heart and life, our faith is vain, and we in a state of condemnation; and teach us that we ought to be no more confident of our good state, than in proportion as our sanctification is evident! How sad it is that they should attribute all their doubts to carnal reason or the devil, which, indeed, are but the secret dictates of their own consciences, and are so agreeable to the word of God! What a dreadful spirit is this that thus leads them off from the word of God, and so blinds their minds that they cannot understand it, nor dare believe it! Surely it can be no other than Satan transformed into an angel of light.*

* *Obj.* But the Scripture forbids doubting. "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Ans. In that text, Christ does not blame Peter for doubting his state, but for doubting he should be drowned.

Obj. But Christ "upbraided them with their unbelief."

Ans. He did not blame them for not believing they were in a good state, but for not believing that he was risen from the dead.

Obj. But Abraham is commended, in that "against hope he believed in hope."

Ans. But the thing to be believed, and hoped for, was, that he should have a son, which he had good grounds to expect. So this is nothing to the purpose.

Obj. But St. Paul says, "we walk by faith, and not by sight."

Ans. That is, in all their conduct, they were governed by a realizing belief of unseen things, and not by things seen and temporal. It was not Paul's way to lie dead whole months and years together, nor was he ever driven to such a

Alas! alas! How does the god of this world blind the minds of them that believe not! Some firmly believe that there is no such thing as a good man's knowing that he has grace; and so they contentedly live along, not knowing what world they are hastening unto; to heaven or to hell; but they hope their state is good, and hope their hope is well grounded, but know not but that their hope is that of the hypocrite; yea, they are not willing to believe there is any such thing as knowing; for that would make them suspect that they are wrong, and that true religion is something they never had; which if it be the case, yet they are not willing to know it. They hide themselves in the dark! They say there is no light; and will not believe that a good man may know that he has passed from death to life. While others, from the very same principle, — namely, because they hate the light, — firmly believe that it is a sin to doubt; and so will never, dare never call their state into question, and thoroughly look through the matter: both are equally rotten at heart, and so equally hate the light, although they take different methods to keep from

strait, as to be forced to believe himself to be in a good state, without sufficient evidence.

Obj. But "what is not of faith is sin." But doubts arise from unbelief.

Ans. 1. If any man does not believe that it is lawful for him to do some particular act, and yet ventures to do it, he sins; he acts against his own conscience. This is the plain sense of the text, and so this text is nothing to the purpose.

2. A hypocrite's doubts are wont to arise from unbelief, that is, from his not steadfastly believing the immediate revelations which he had from the devil, that his sins are pardoned. The devil tries to keep him quiet; but sometimes his conscience is a little awakened, and then he fears and doubts he is deluded; and now the devil tries to make him believe that it is a sin to doubt. The devil would fain make him believe all is well, that is, believe at a venture, without a thorough search and trial, and without sufficient evidence.

3. It is a sin for a true believer to live so as not to have his evidences clear; but it is no sin for him to be so honest and impartial, as to doubt, when, in fact, his evidences are not clear. It is a sin to darken his evidences; but it is no sin to see that they are darkened. It is a sin for a man, by rioting and drunkenness, to make himself sick; but it is no sin to feel that he is sick; or, if there be grounds for it, to doubt he shall die. We may bring calamities upon ourselves by our sins, both outward and inward, and our calamities may arise from our sins; and yet our calamities have not the nature of sins, but are rather of the nature of punishments. It is sin, in believers, which lays the foundation for doubts; it is sin which is the occasion of their doubts; but their doubts are not sins any the more for this. Some seem to suppose that every thing which is occasioned by sin, is sin; but there is no truth in their supposition. It is not a sin for unconverted people to think themselves to be unconverted; and yet that thought of themselves is occasioned by sin; for their being unconverted is their sin.

Obj. But believers are exhorted to "hold fast their confidence." And it is said, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

Ans. That is, their confidence that Jesus is the Christ, together with a true faith in him, as is manifest from the whole context. Nor is any thing more absurd than to say, that men shall be made partakers of Christ, if they hold fast their confidence of their good state, which is what many a hypocrite does, and that to the very last. (Matt. vii. 22. Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27.)

it; and the devil does his utmost to keep both fast bound where they are.

Happy the true believer, who is made impartial by divine grace! It is a recovery to God and holiness that he is after; a confidence that his sins are pardoned, without this, would be but a poor thing. If he obtain this, he gets what he wants; and if not, he feels himself undone; nor can he flatter himself that he has obtained it, when he has not; and this he makes his only evidence of God's eternal love, and of his title to eternal glory; and believes his state to be good no further than this goes. (Matt. vii. 21—27.)

Thus I have gone through the first use, the use of instruction; and thus we see how a right understanding of the law will set many of the important doctrines of religion in a clear and easy, in a scriptural and rational light. By the law we may learn the primitive state of man, and how low we are fallen, and to what we must be recovered; and so, by consequence, how averse we are to a recovery; what grace we need to recover us; and so, by consequence, that we must be saved by sovereign grace, or not at all; whence the reasonableness of the saints' perseverance appears; and, from the whole, the nature of the Christian conflict and the attainableness of assurance are discovered. And I will conclude this use with two remarks:

Remark 1. If the law requires what, I think, I have proved it does, and a conformity to it consists in what I have before described, then all the other particulars do necessarily and most inevitably follow. Such was the image of God in which Adam was created, and such is our natural depravity, and such are the best duties of the unregenerate, and such is the nature of conversion, and our aversion to it, etc.; so that, if my first principles are true, then the whole scheme is, beyond dispute, true also. And what are my first principles? Why, that to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, is originally the very essence of religion; and that the grounds upon which God requires us so to do, are to be the motives of our obedience. He requires us to love him supremely, etc., because he is supremely glorious and amiable, and because our additional obligations to him are what they are. He requires us to love our neighbors as ourselves, because they are what they are, and stand in such relations to us. With a perfect moral rectitude of temper, influenced and governed by truth; by the reason and fitness of things, he would have us love and glorify him as God, that is, as being what he is, and love and treat our neighbors as being what

they are. And is not this evidently the meaning of the divine law?

Remark 2. If the law, as a rule of life, be so abated and altered, as that now it only requires us, merely from a principle of self-love and for self-ends, sincerely to endeavor to love God and keep his commands, and aim at his glory; and if the law, as a covenant, be disannulled, and such an obedience be substituted in the room of perfection, as a condition of eternal life, or as a condition of our interest in Christ, then the contrary to all that I have laid down is most true and certain. For let the primitive state of man be what it would, it is plain we are not entirely destitute of a conformity to this new law, much less diametrically opposite to it in the natural temper of our minds; nor are our best duties, while unregenerate, sin; it is plain, conversion is another and a much easier thing, and that we are not so entirely averse to it, and do not need irresistible grace, nor lie at God's sovereign mercy, etc. All these things, and many more such like, are plain, if the good old law is thus altered and abated, and thus disannulled; if the new law requires no more, and this be the condition of eternal life, or of an interest in Christ. So that, if any are disposed to disbelieve what have been laid down as consequences, and to build upon another fabric; if they will be consistent with themselves, they can lay no other foundation than this, namely, "to destroy the law;" which I have before proved to be as impossible as to destroy the nature of God; because the moral law necessarily results from the divine perfections, and our obligations to conform to it are infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, as the nature and perfections of God himself.

And, therefore, I think, we may conclude, with the greatest certainty, that this foundation, namely, that the law is thus abated and altered, is but sand; and that the fabric built upon it will not stand. If the law had required us to love ourselves supremely, and live to ourselves ultimately, and to have endeavored to love God and our neighbors only to answer our own ends, then this sort of religion would have been right. Did I say right? No; it would not be right, being unalterably contrary to the very reason and nature of things; nor could such a law have been possibly made by a God who loves righteousness and hates iniquity. But if this was right, if this was religion, it is plain mankind have the root of the matter in them; for they are all naturally inclined to love themselves supremely, and live to themselves ultimately; and so would not need to be born again, to have a new

nature; the old nature would be sufficient; they would only need to be convinced that it is for their interest to endeavor to love God and do their duty, and merely self-love would make them religious, in order to answer their own ends. But if the law never has been thus abated and altered, then this religion is really no religion at all; nothing but mere hypocrisy, and of a nature diametrically opposite to true holiness. Only let it be clearly determined what the nature of the moral law is, and there will be a final end put to a hundred controversies.

Here is a man: he reforms his life a little, and joins with the church: he prays in his family, and sometimes in his closet; and, for the most part, it may be, he is honest in his dealings, and civil and sober in his behavior; and this is his conversion; this is his religion. And now he pleads that conversion is a gradual thing, because his was such; and that a man cannot know when he was converted, because that is the case with him; that there is no need of irresistible grace, because he knows that it is a pretty easy thing to convert as he has done; and he hates the doctrine of divine sovereignty, because he never felt any need of a sovereign grace to save him; and he holds falling from grace, because his religion is as easily lost as gotten. But does he know that he has any grace, after all? No, no; that is a thing, (says he,) none can know. He believes the Holy Spirit assists him; but he is not sensible of his influences, or of any help from him, any more than if he had none. He believes he loves God, and is a true saint at heart; but he does not feel any more love to God, or grace in his heart, than if there was none there; and the reason is, because there is none. But being secure in sin, and it being for his worldly interest to make a profession of religion, he now sets up for a good man. "For without the law sin is dead;" and so he is "alive without the law." And now those doctrines and that preaching which are calculated to detect his hypocrisy, and awaken him out of his security, he hates and cries out against. And if any seem to experience any thing further in religion than he has, for that very reason he condemns it all for delusion. But he pretends mightily to plead up for morality and good works, though, in truth, he is an enemy to all real holiness. This is the course of many; but some are more sincere, and strict, and conscientious in their way.

But let men be ever so sincere, strict, and conscientious in their religion, if all results merely from self-love, the slavish fears of hell, and mercenary hopes of heaven, there is not, in

all their religion, the least real, genuine conformity to the moral law; it is all but a hypocritical, feigned show of love and obedience; it is not the thing which the law requires, but something of a quite different nature; unless we lay aside God's old and everlasting law, and invent a new, abated, altered law, which shall declare that to be right, which, in the nature of things, is unalterably wrong; and by such a law, such a religion will pass for genuine. But it is sad, when we are driven to invent a new law, to vindicate our religion and our hopes of heaven, since, at the day of judgment, we shall find the old law to be in full force.

I am sensible that old objection will be always rising: "But it is not just that God should require of us more than we can do, and then threaten to damn us for not doing of it." Just as if God may not require us to love him with all our hearts, merely because we are not suited with him; and just as if we were not to blame for being of such a bad temper and disposition, merely because we are thoroughly settled in it, and have no heart to be otherwise; just as if the worse any one is, the less he is to blame; than which nothing can be more absurd. Truly, I cannot but think, that, by this, we are so far from being excused, that, even merely for this we deserve eternal damnation. For what can be much worse than to be so thoroughly settled and fixed in such a bad temper of mind? But, notwithstanding all that I have offered to clear this point heretofore, I will add, that if it is not just for God to require any more of us than we can do, — that is, any more than we have, not only a natural, but a moral power to perform, — then these things will necessarily follow: —

1. That there was not the least need of Christ's dying for us as our Redeemer. For did we need him to make any atonement or satisfaction for our sins? Surely no; for God could not justly require of us more satisfaction for our sins than we were able to make; for that would be to require more than we can do. Did we need him to purchase the divine favor and eternal life for us? Surely no; for God could not justly require any more of us, as a condition of his favor and eternal life, than we ourselves were able to do. Did we need him to purchase an abatement of the law? Surely no; for God could not, in his law, justly require of us more than we could do; and we did not need to have the law brought down lower than this. Well, therefore, might St. Paul tell the Galatians, that "if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." For if our doing as well as we can, in the sense before explained, is all that righteousness that God can justly require,

this alone most certainly would be every way sufficient for our salvation; nor did we need a Savior any more than the angels in heaven; for we have just as much power to do as well as we can, as they have to do as well as they can. To say the contrary is a contradiction in express terms.

2. Nor was there the least need that the Holy Spirit should be sent into the world, to grant any inward assistance, to enable us to do our duty. For we had a full and perfect power to do all our duty, without any such assistance; for God could not justly require of us any more than we could do; and every one is able to do what he can, without any assistance.

So that, if this principle be true, that God cannot justly require of us any more than we can do, it is plain we neither needed a Redeemer nor a Sanctifier; so that all the infinite pains which God has taken for our redemption and salvation, has been unnecessary and fruitless. To do as well as we could, was all that would have been needful; and this is still as much required as ever; so that we are just where we should have been, if nothing had ever been done for us. So that this notion entirely undermines and subverts the whole Christian religion, in supposing that all the extraordinary and wonderful provision therein made for the salvation of sinners was needless; for if all was needless, then the whole is perfectly incredible; for it is incredible to suppose that God would do so much, and such great things, when there was no need of it; so that this notion leads directly to infidelity. Yea, if this principle be true, we may be certain that the gospel is full of deceit; for the gospel every where supposes sinners to have been in a helpless, undone state, and that they might justly have been left so, and perished forever: and it every where represents it as owing entirely to the free grace and infinitely great goodness of God, that he sent his Son into the world to be a Savior, and the Holy Spirit to be a Sanctifier; all which, upon this principle, is notoriously false; for we were not in a helpless, undone condition; being able, of ourselves, to do all that God could justly require of us, in order to eternal life. Nor did we need to be beholden to God for his grace and goodness, his Son or his Spirit; being able, of ourselves, to do all that which he could justly require at our hands. Yea, upon this principle, the gospel offers the highest affront to human nature, in that it supposes us to be such vile, helpless, undone, guilty wretches, when, indeed, and in truth, we are not. And, therefore, so long as men really believe this notion, they cannot possibly but hate the doctrines of the gospel, and oppose them; and so, in fact, it has always been.

To conclude, therefore: since it is so evident from the law, and so evident from the gospel, that we are sinful, guilty, helpless, undone creatures, had not we better give in to it, and come down, and lie in the dust, before the Lord, who knows what we are, whether we will own it or no? Had we not better own his law to be holy, just, and good, and acknowledge that we lie at his sovereign mercy, and be willing to be beholden to free grace, through Jesus Christ, for our salvation, since we must do so or never be saved? What will it profit us to fly in his face, and say, it is not just for him to require more than we can do, and then damn us for not doing? when all he requires is, only that we love God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves, which, in the nature of things, is infinitely reasonable; and when all our impotency arises only from our sinfulness, and so, instead of extenuating our fault, only discovers how sinful we are. Surely, since all the world stand guilty before God, really guilty, and are so accounted by him, we all had best to stop our mouths, and own the sentence just, by which we stand condemned, while it is a time of mercy; for who can tell but God may pity us?

There is but one way now left to evade the force of what has been said. To a strict demonstration, the law is not, and cannot be abated; there is now no way, therefore, but to deny that there ever was such a law. But then, if God be what I suppose him to be, to a demonstration the law must be such too; there is no way, therefore, but to deny that there is any such God! Well, but if God be not what I suppose, what is he? Why, we may see the whole scheme by the following objection, in a few words.

Obj. God is a being of infinite understanding and almighty power, perfectly disposed to seek the good and happiness of his creatures as his last end. He loves virtue, and rewards it, merely because it tends to make them happy. He hates vice, and punishes it, merely because it tends to make them miserable: all he has in view, in his commands and prohibitions; in his promises and threatenings, is the good, and nothing but merely the good of his creatures; yea, he esteems things to be virtuous, merely because they tend to make us happy; and vicious, merely because they tend to make us miserable. And now, therefore, if we look upon things as he does, and prosecute the same end; if we love and practise virtue with a sincere view to our own happiness, as our last end, we do all that God would have us do. And how can we, if we weigh things, but most heartily and sincerely love so good a God, so kind a Father, who so dearly loves us, and so tenderly seeks our good?

Ans. True, if God were verily such a one, the most wicked man in the world could not but love him. Self-love would make it natural. Even publicans love those who love them; and are good to those who are kind to them. (Matt. v.) Did men firmly believe God to be such a one, they could not, indeed, possibly be at enmity against him. Self-love would not admit of it. Men would not need any grace to make them love God. Nature would make them love him. They could not but love him, so long as they love themselves. And now, if God, indeed, be such a one, I readily own there is no truth in my whole scheme; but, from first to last, it is all a mistake; for it is altogether built upon a supposition that there is a God, of a temper essentially different.

But then I would query, — if God be such a one, if he aims only at his creatures' happiness, why does he ever inflict misery upon them? If he means only to make them happy, why does he ever make them miserable? Why did he drown the old world; burn Sodom; and why does he damn sinners to all eternity?

It cannot be because justice requires it; for, upon this scheme, justice does not require it. For, upon this scheme, sin does, in strict justice, deserve no punishment at all.

A crime deserves no punishment any further than it is blameworthy. A crime is blameworthy no further than we are under obligations to do otherwise. According to their scheme, all our obligations to be virtuous result merely from its tendency to make us happy. Upon their scheme, therefore, a sinner is to blame for his sins, merely because sin is cross to his own happiness, and tends to make him miserable; there is no other evil in sin but this. This is the only reason why God hates it, is set against it, and disposed to punish it. This is the only reason why he would have them avoid it; and this is the only reason they are to blame for it. No man is blameworthy for sin any further than he was under obligations to the contrary. All our obligations to virtue, according to them, arise from its natural tendency to make us happy; and, therefore, all the evil of sin must arise from its natural tendency to make us miserable. This misery, therefore, is exactly equal to the evil of sin; for all the evil of sin arises from it, or rather consists in it. This misery is all the evil of sin; and this misery is, therefore, all that renders sin blameworthy; that is, I am to blame for taking a course that tends to make me miserable. And why? Merely because it tends to make me miserable; for that reason, and for no other. Therefore I am so much to blame, and no more, for what I do, than according to the degree of its tendency to

make me miserable. This misery, therefore, which naturally results from what I do, is equal to my blame; and is, therefore, the worst, and all that I deserve; for no crime deserves to be punished, any further than it is blameworthy.* And from the whole, to a demonstration, it follows, that, upon their scheme, sin deserves no inflicted pain or misery, by way of punishment, over and above the pain or misery which results necessarily from its own nature. And now, if sin does not deserve any such punishment, then justice does not require the Governor of the world to inflict any such upon any of his creatures, though ever so sinful; for justice does not require him to inflict a punishment that is not at all deserved; yea, rather it seems cruelty so to do. If, therefore, justice did not require it, why did God drown the old world, and burn Sodom; and why does he damn sinners to all eternity?

Certainly he did not aim at their good when he drowned the old world and burnt Sodom; and certainly he cannot aim at sinners' good in their eternal damnation. There are some calamities in this life, which God might be supposed to send upon his creatures for their good; and indeed, all things considered, they are well adapted to do them good; yea, and are all made to work together for good to them that love God, and may be numbered among their mercies. But what shall we say when God drowns a whole world, burns up several cities, and damns to all eternity millions of his creatures? yea, and all for nothing, when they deserved no ill at his hands, not the least! Where is his justice now? Yea, where is his goodness? Or what does he mean? What does he intend?

Certainly he cannot intend to deal so severely with some of his poor creatures, who never deserved any ill at his hands, merely for the good of others, to fright, and warn, and deter them from vice; for this would be to do evil that good might come; yea, this would be the way rather that good might never

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* *Obj.* "But are we not, according to their scheme, under obligations resulting from the authority and command of God?"

Ans. We are, according to their scheme, under no obligations to regard the authority and command of God at all; only, and merely, and purely, because it is for our interest so to do; as themselves acknowledge.

Obj. "But are we not, according to them, obliged to have regard to our neighbor's welfare?"

Ans. Only, merely, purely because it is for our own interest to do so; for, according to them, all our obligations to practise any virtue, arise, originally, only from its being for our own interest. The language of such a practice plainly is, that there is not one being in the whole system worth regarding, but myself. "I am, and besides me there is no other! I will regard none, but just to answer my own ends; and so, really and strictly, regard none but myself." This is a religion that will suit nature; and, in this sense, may justly be called natural religion.

come; for how could any of his creatures or subjects heartily love him or like his conduct, while they behold millions of their fellow-creatures suffering, for nothing at all, such infinite pains under his hands? Where is his justice? would they all cry. And where is his goodness? They would hate him, and flee from him, and dread a government so infinitely tyrannical. Indeed, to inflict a proper punishment, in case of just desert, is a good thing; tends to maintain government, and make men afraid of sin, and stand in awe of the great Lawgiver and Judge of the world. Yea, it is a beautiful conduct, and tends to make God appear amiable in the eyes of all holy beings. (Rev. xix. 1, 6.) But to afflict and torment poor creatures, who do not at all deserve it, and that forever, cannot possibly answer any good end; but of necessity, must promote a thousand bad ones, when, all the time, the true state of the case is publicly known and understood throughout all God's dominions. It is just as if a father, who has ten children, should tie up five every Monday morning, and whip them almost to death for nothing in the world but to make the rest love him, and be good and obedient children. And would they love him any the more for this? Yea, they could not but hate so cruel a tyrant. Now, therefore, if their scheme be true, why did God drown the old world, and burn Sodom? And why does he damn sinners to *all* eternity?

Yea, if sin deserves no inflicted punishment, as, upon their scheme, it does not, why does God ever once inflict the least, the very least punishment for it in all his dominions? And that which, though not, in its own nature, more unaccountable, yet is more surprising, why has God, all along from the beginning of the world, been inflicting such a dreadful train of punishments for sin? Why did God turn the angels out of heaven for their first sin, and doom them to an eternal hell, when they did not at all deserve it? Why did God threaten Adam with death in case of disobedience? Why is death said to be the wages of sin? Why did God cause the earth to open and swallow up Korah and his company? Why did God cause the carcasses of six hundred thousand to fall in the wilderness? Why did God strike Uzza dead? And why a thousand more things which have happened in the sight of the world? Surely it cannot be for our good to be struck dead and sent to hell; and surely it cannot be for the good of any in all God's world, that shall see or ever hear of it, when, all the while, it is publicly known that we deserve no ill at God's hands; no, not the least.

And now, after all, to torment us in hell forever, for nothing

in the world, where the fire shall never be quenched, and the worm shall never die; yea, and to appoint a day of judgment, under a pretence of doing nothing but strict justice; and to summon all the worlds together, to see and hear, to the end that his impartiality and justice might appear to all, when, all the while, he knows, and all the world knows, that his poor creatures deserve no ill at his hands; no, not the least! What can he mean?

Yea, and that which is a great deal worse than all, that I even shudder to think of it, he not only makes a law to punish sinners eternally in hell, when there was no reason for it, but puts it in execution upon his poor creatures who do not deserve it; but having one only Son, of equal glory with himself, he delivers him to death, in the room and stead of sinners; pretending that sin was so bad a thing, that without the shedding of blood there could be no remission, and therefore his own Son must die, to the end he might be just, while he justified the sinner that should believe in him; while, all the time, if their scheme is true, he knew, and all the world will know, sooner or later, that sin never deserved the least punishment at his hands!

To conclude, therefore: If God be what they suppose, I grant the scheme I have laid down is not right; and it is equally evident that the Bible is not right neither: for the law and the gospel, the Old Testament and the New, every where suppose, and take it for granted, that sin is an infinite evil; deserves the wrath and curse of God; all the miseries of this life, and death itself, and the pains of hell forever: the law threatens all this. According to the gospel, Christ has died to redeem us from all this, as what we justly deserve. The Bible, therefore, in a word, supposes we deserve it all; but their scheme supposes we do not. The God that made the Bible has no doubt of it; he made his law upon this ground, and upon this footing he gave his Son to die; has appointed a day of judgment, and prepared a place of torment; a lake of fire and brimstone: but their God is of quite another mind; can see no such infinite evil in sin; yea, no evil at all in it, but what results from its tendency to make us miserable. Their God, therefore, is not the God of Israel, nor the God that made the Bible; and, therefore, is no God; is nothing but an image framed in their own fancy, suited to their own hearts.

Besides, their idea of God is contrary, not only thus to the general tenor of Scripture, but also to many plain and express declarations. First. It is manifest that God does not make the happiness of his creatures his last end, from Exod. ix. 16;

Num. xiv. 13—21; Lev. x. 3; Psalm cvi. 8; Ezek. xx; Ezek. xxxvi. 21, 22, 23, and xxxviii. 23, xxxix 6, 7, 13, 21, 22; Rom. ix. 22, 23; Rom. xi. 36; Rev. iv. 11. Secondly. It is manifest that God does not require his creatures to love and obey him merely because it tends to make them happy so to do, from Exod. xx. 2; Lev. xix. 2; Psalm xxix. 2, xcvi. 4, 8, cxlviii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 20. Thirdly. It is manifest that God does not threaten and punish sin merely because it tends to make his creatures miserable, from 1 Sam. ii. 29, 30; 2 Sam. xii. 7—14; Psalm li. 4; Mal. i. 6, 7, 8, 14.

But to conclude: How sad and dreadful a thing will it be, for poor sinners, when they come to die, and enter into the world of spirits, there to find that the God they once loved and trusted in was nothing but an image framed in their own fancy! They hated the God of Israel, and hated his law, and therefore would not believe that God or his law were indeed what they were. They were resolved to have a God and a law more to their minds. How dreadful will their disappointment be! How dreadful their surprise! They would never own they were enemies to God; now they see their enmity was so great as to make them resolutely, notwithstanding the plainest evidence, even to deny him to be what he was. And how righteous will the ways of the Lord appear to be, in that he gave such over to strong delusions to believe a lie, who did not love, and would not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness! (2 Thes. ii. 10—12.) So, the Gentile nations, not liking to retain God in their knowledge, were given over to reprobate minds, and left every nation to make such a God as best pleased themselves. (Rom. i.) But it is time to proceed to the next use.

SECTION VI.

RULES OF TRIAL.

Use II. Which may be of examination. What has been said may serve to clear up, to real saints, their gracious state, and may afford matter of conviction to others.

And here I would take the humble believer in his element, that is, in his closet, where he retires from the noise and business of the world; where he loves to be alone, to read the Bible; to meditate on the perfections of God, and think of his

works and ways; where he mourns, and prays, and loves God, and gives up himself to him. In a serious hour of sweet retirement, when you are most yourself, and your thoughts most about you, I would inquire, What are your views? And what is the inward temper of your mind? And how do you live? And what is it that habitually influences you in your daily conduct?

Do you know God? Do you see him to be such a one as he really is; even such a one as the Scriptures represent him to be? And do you account him infinitely glorious and amiable in being such a one? And do you begin to love him with all your heart? Do you esteem him so as to exult in his supremacy and absolute sovereignty? and so will seek his glory, and value his honor and interest, as to give up yourself to live to him; and so delight in him, as to choose him for your present and everlasting portion? True, your remaining blindness and ignorance is very great; but do you not feel it, and groan under it as your burden, and hate yourself for it as your sin, lamenting the sottishness of your heart, that you should be so senseless and brutish, after so many outward advantages and inward helps, and amidst such clear manifestations made of God and of his infinite glory, in his word, and in all his works and ways; and feel that you are wholly to blame for the stupidity and unteachableness of your heart; ready to say with him of old, "So foolish am I, and ignorant, I am as a beast before thee"? Your disesteem of God and unconcernedness about his honor and interest is great, and you have still a disposition to hate to live upon God only, without any thing else to take comfort in, as the portion of your soul; and so you are inclined to forget God, to forsake him, to depart, and go away, and fall in love with something else, and seek another resting-place, and something else to take comfort in. But do you not feel this your remaining want of conformity to God's law, and native contrariety to it? And do you not hate it, and hate yourself for it? Do you not groan under it, and lament it, and watch, and pray, and fight against it, feeling the infinite sinfulness of it? saying, "The law is holy, just, and good; but I am carnal, sold under sin. O wretched man that I am!"

And what are the grounds of your love to God, and from what motives is it that you are influenced to love him? Does God, indeed, appear infinitely great, glorious, and amiable in being what he is? And do you love him because he is just such a one? Do you love to meditate his incomprehensibly glorious perfections, and wonder and adore? Are you glad

that he knows all things, and can do every thing? Are the various manifestations of divine wisdom, in the moral government of the world, glorious in your eyes? Does it suit your heart that God governs the world as he does? Do you love that the pride of all flesh should be brought low, and the Lord alone be exalted? Are you glad that God loves righteousness and hates iniquity as he does; and do you heartily approve the strictness of his law in the matter of your duty, and the severity thereof against the least sin? And are you sweetly sensible of the infinite goodness of God, and of his truth and faithfulness? And does God appear infinitely glorious because he is just what he is? And is this the primary foundation of your love? In a word, do you see him as the great Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the world; as the Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Savior of his people, as he has thus revealed himself by his word and in his works; and do you love him for being what he is? And do you also feel the powerful influence of those superadded obligations you are under to love him? In other cases, when we love any thing, we know why we love it; so, also, do believers know why they love the Lord their God.

And does it not appear to you infinitely reasonable that you should love God with all your heart; that you should be wholly his, and wholly for him, and make him your all, while you behold his infinite glory; his complete all-sufficiency; his original, entire right to you, and absolute authority over you? And does not his law, in requiring you to do so, appear to be infinitely right, perfectly holy, just, and good; worthy to stand in full force forever, unabated and unaltered? And do you not see that the least want of conformity to this law, or transgression of it, is infinitely vile, and that a perfect conformity thereto deserves no thanks? And do you not feel yourself wholly to blame for your not being altogether such as the law requires? Hypocrites are generally very ignorant of the law, in its true meaning and strictness; and so are ignorant of their want of conformity unto it, and of their inward contrariety to it, (Rom. vii. 8, 9;) for otherwise all hypocrites would know certainly that they have no grace. But yet hypocrites, at least many of them, know something about the law, and their want of conformity to it, and something about their inward contrariety to it; and hence may complain of the blindness of their minds, the deadness of their hearts, and of their pride and worldliness; but no hypocrite is heartily sensible that the law is holy, just, and good in requiring perfection; and that he himself is entirely to blame for not

being perfectly holy, and that the fault is wholly his. Some will say, "I desire to love God, and to aim at his glory, and do my duty; but no man is, or can be, perfect: and God does not require more of us than we can do." And so they think themselves excusable, and are not sensible that it is infinitely vile in them not to love God with all their hearts. Others will say, "I can do nothing of myself; it is Christ that must do all. I desire to love God, but I cannot. It is the Spirit that must fill my heart with love, and God is the sovereign dispenser of his grace; so that, if I am dead, and dull, and senseless, and stupid, I cannot help it." And so they also think themselves excusable, and are not sensible that it is infinitely vile in them not to love God with all their hearts. But now, how stands the case with you? Have you any secret way of excusing yourself? Or do you see that the law is holy, just, and good, and that you only are to blame, wholly to blame, and altogether without excuse; yea, and exceedingly vile, for all your blindness and deadness, and for every thing wherein you are not just what the law requires you to be? It is this which makes believers sensible of their desert of damnation, all their lives long, and loathe and abhor themselves before the Lord; and it is this which causes them more and more to see their need of Christ and free grace, and admire and prize the glorious gospel. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And do you begin to be of a disposition really to love your neighbor as yourself? Are your affections under the government of a spirit of disinterested impartiality, so that you are disposed to value yourself only for those properties in you that are good and excellent, and only in proportion to their worth and excellence; and, by this rule, to esteem your neighbors, your friends, and your foes, and all men? And do you hate a contrary disposition in you? And is your heart full of love, and kindness, and benevolence, wishing well to all, seeking the good of all, and even grieved when your enemies are in adversity?

And to conclude: does love to God and to your neighbor govern you in your thoughts, affections, and actions, and daily influence you to live to God, and do good in the world; so that now you are not your own, but given up to God, to do his will, seeking his glory? A holy life does as naturally proceed from a holy heart, as a stream does from a living fountain.

Once you was darkness; but are you now light in the Lord? Once, as to right, spiritual views of God, your neighbor, or

yourself, of this world or the next, you had none: you was blind; your understanding was darkened; and so your apprehensions were wrong, and you loved your wrong apprehensions, and took pleasure in error, falsehood, and sin; and hated the light; hated truth and duty; once you was wholly devoid of the divine image, and destitute of all good; yea, and you was wholly averse from God, and full of all evil. And did you ever see and feel this to be your state? And have you, by divine grace, been recovered out of it? Have you been effectually taught that your light was darkness, and your knowledge ignorance, and been made sensible of the blindness of your mind? And have you learnt that all your seeming goodness was counterfeit, and that in you did dwell no good thing; yea, that your seeming goodness was real wickedness, in that your heart was in perfect contrariety to God and his law? Has divine light shined in your heart, and your native darkness, as well as contracted blindness, been dispelled from your soul; so that now your views of God, of your neighbor and yourself, of this world and the next, are right, and your apprehensions according to truth? And has the truth made you free? Do you now look upon God, in some measure, according to the capacity of a creature, as he does upon himself, when he takes upon him the character of most high God, supreme Lord, and sovereign Governor of the whole world, and says, "I am the Lord: that is my name, and besides me there is no other God"? And do you see it is infinitely fit that all the world should love, worship, and adore him? Do you now look upon your neighbors in some measure as God does, when he commands you to love them as yourself; and so see that it is perfectly right that you should? And do you look upon yourself, and every thing in this world, in some measure as God does, when he commands you to deny yourself, and forsake all things for his sake; and see that it is most fit and reasonable to die to yourself and to this world, and give up yourself to God, to love him, and live to him, and delight in him forever? And do you understand that the things which are seen are temporal, and that the things which are unseen are eternal? And do all possible troubles in the ways of God, in some measure, appear only as light afflictions, which are but for a moment, and not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed? Do you thus know the truth; and has the truth made you free from your old servitude; and are you effectually influenced and governed by these views and apprehensions, and this sense of things, to bring forth fruit to God a hundred fold, or sixty fold, or at

least thirty fold? For divine knowledge is efficacious, and the holy and divine effects and fruits are always equal to the degree of knowledge. "And every branch which bringeth not forth fruit, is cut off and cast into the fire." Are you thus born again, and become a new creature, and learnt to live a new and divine life?

And is it not now most manifest to you that all this is so far from having been the product of nature, that all that is in nature, every natural propensity of the heart, has, from first to last, been utterly against the change, and made a constant and mighty resistance? And do you not plainly perceive, that, from first to last, the work has been begun and carried on by God himself?

And does it not appear to you as the most astonishing goodness in God, and owing to nothing but his sovereign free grace, that you have thus been called out of darkness into marvellous light; turned from the power of sin and Satan, to serve the living God? And do you not plainly see there is nothing but the same infinite goodness and free grace to move God to carry on and complete this work in your heart, and that so, if ever you get to heaven, the whole of your salvation, from first to last, will be absolutely and entirely to be attributed to free grace? And have you not hence learnt to live upon free grace, through Jesus Christ, for all things?

And do you not perceive that he, who has begun, does actually carry on the work of grace in your hearts? And that all the external dispensations of Providence and internal influences of the Spirit concur, in their operation, to humble you, and wean you from the world, and embitter sin; to bring you nearer to God, and to love him, and to live to him, and to live upon him; and to make you more serious; more spiritually minded and heavenly minded; more watchful and prayerful, and more loving, and kind, and tender-hearted, and obliging to all mankind, both friends and foes; and to make you daily attend upon the duties of your particular calling, and upon all the common business of life, as a servant of God, in singleness of heart, doing service to the Lord?

And although you was once dead in sin, and wholly without strength, yet do you not now feel that you are spiritually alive, and so put into a capacity for a spiritual activity, and that you are engaged to be active for God? Not that your sufficiency is of yourself, as once you thought it was; for you are not sufficient of yourself, as of yourself; but your sufficiency is of God. Yet do you not find that through Christ's strengthening, you can do all things? And do you not from the heart hate

the way of lazy, dead-hearted hypocrites, who sit still, and carelessly cry, "We can do nothing; it is Christ that must do all;" and, under a notion of not doing any thing in their own strength, gratify their laziness, and do nothing at all! Accursed laziness! Accursed hypocrisy! Do you not feel, I say, that you are put into a capacity for spiritual activity? And are you not engaged to be active for God? For you are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, that you might walk in them. While the Spirit of God is taking down the power of sin in your heart and slaying your corruptions, are you not also crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts? While God is working in you to will and to do, are you not working out your salvation with fear and trembling — with filial fear and holy concern? While the Spirit of God gives you might in the inner man, do not you put on the whole armor of God, and fight with flesh and blood; with principalities and powers? This is the way of believers. And the spirit does not come upon them by fits, as it did upon Balaam, but dwells in them and abides in them forever, to purify them from all iniquity, and make them a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Finally, do you not experience that your religion is something real and perceptible, and see that it is specifically different from any thing that possibly can arise merely from a principle of self-love? You perceive your views of God, and sense of his greatness, glory, and beauty; and you perceive your sense of the world's emptiness, and of your own natural vileness and wretchedness; and your love to God, your weanedness from the world, and your mourning for sin are perceptible. And is it not easy to perceive why you love God, are weaned from the world, and mourn for sin; namely, because God is infinitely lovely, the world empty and worthless, and sin the greatest evil? And while these views and affections effectually influence you to all holy living, their genuineness is made still more evident and plain; and from the whole, you arise to a rational and scriptural knowledge of your gracious state.

From what has been said upon this subject, a great variety of other questions might be put to the believer; but the whole has been treated so plainly and practically, that I need add no more. And if graceless persons had it in their hearts to be honest and impartial, they might easily know that they are strangers to real religion. But if they have not the thing itself, they will either work up something like it, or else deny that there is any such thing; for he that doeth evil hateth the light; and so does he who has a rotten heart. And hence some cry, "The best have their failings;" and they watch

and catch at the failings of such as are accounted godly, and dwell upon them, and magnify them; and so quiet their consciences, and go on in their sins. Others cry, "The best are dead sometimes;" and so maintain their hopes, although they lie dead whole months and years together, and live in sin, and never come to sound repentance. Others cry, "You will discourage weak Christians;" meaning themselves. Just as if there were a sort of Christians that cannot bear the light, nor stand a scriptural trial. What will they do when they come before the awful bar of the heart-searching God? Others cry, "But every Christian does not experience alike;" and so, though they are destitute of the very essence and life of religion, yet they hope all is well; and many are confident that these things are not so. "For," say they, "if these things be true, who then shall be saved?" I answer, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life; and few there be that find it. But wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many go in thereat." And mark what follows in the next verse: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." "Ye shall know them by their fruits." By what fruits? Why, this is the constant character of false prophets throughout the Bible, that they cry, Peace and safety, and heal the wound of poor sinners slightly, and daub with untempered mortar; that is, they make religion to be an easier thing than it is; more agreeable to corrupt nature; and so encourage sinners to rest in something short of true grace. So the Pharisees did, notwithstanding all their pretended strictness; and so the Arminians do, notwithstanding all their seeming zeal for good works; and so the Antinomians do, notwithstanding all their pretences to extraordinary light, and joy, and zeal, and purity, and holiness. And this is the common character of all false prophets, and false teachers, and heretics, that, being enemies to true religion, they cut out a false scheme in their heads, to suit their own hearts; and so, however greatly they may differ in many things, yet herein all agree, to make religion an easier thing than the Bible does, and to make the gate wider, and the way broader, than Christ and his apostles; and, by this mark, the difference between them and the true prophets may always be certainly known; and therefore Christ having just said, Strait is the gate and narrow the way, etc., immediately adds, Beware of false prophets; by their fruits ye shall know them; for they all invent some easier way to heaven, though it may be in sheep's clothing; that is, under a show of great strictness. And, this their invention being false, they are thus denominated false

prophets. And thus what has been said concerning the nature of true religion, may serve to clear up the believer's gracious state, and may afford matter of conviction to others.

SECTION VII.

WE HAVE GREAT REASON TO BE HUMBLE, AND THANKFUL, AND LIVE ENTIRELY DEVOTED TO GOD.

Use III. Of humiliation. What has been said may be improved by sinners and saints to promote their humiliation. For by the law is the knowledge of sin; and a sight and sense of our sinfulness tends to abase us before the Lord.

In this glass of the law, sinners may see what they are in heart and life; and by this rule, they may learn how God looks upon them. There is a knowledge of ourselves, of our hearts and lives, that is natural to us. Men, by their power of self-reflection, have a sort of an acquaintance with themselves; they know their present views and designs; their present inclinations and way of living; and remember, more or less, how they have lived in years past. But men are naturally very ignorant of the nature of God, and of his holy law; and so are very ignorant of themselves in a moral sense; are very insensible how God looks upon them, and what their hearts and lives are, compared with God and his holy law. Natural conscience has some notions about right and wrong, and so does something towards accusing and condemning men, especially for their grosser sins; but natural conscience is for the most part so blind, and so much asleep, and in most men has been so much abused, and brow-beat, and kept under, that it lets men pretty much alone. Men hold the truth in unrighteousness, according to the apostle's phrase, and keep their consciences in chains; and so are, in a great measure, without the law; and hence sin is dead; for where there is no law, there is no transgression; and when men know not the law in its true meaning and extent, they are insensible how they swerve from it, and how contrary they are to it, and how sinful sin is; but when the commandment comes, sin revives.

Think of this, therefore, O sinner, that the infinitely glorious God, your Creator, Preserver, and Governor, deserves to be loved, and lived to, and delighted in with all your heart; and that this is what he requires at your hands; and know it, he

hates your hypocritical shows and pretences, so long as that, in heart, he sees you are an enemy to him. You may pretend that you cannot help your heart's being so bad; but God knows you love your corruptions, and hate to have them slain, and love to have them gratified. You love to be proud, and hence you love to be applauded; and the praise of men is sweet, and of greater price with you than the praise of God: you will do more to please the world than to please God; yea, will displease God, to keep in with a wicked world, who hate God; and God knows it. You love to love the world; and hence love to lay worldly schemes, and are secretly ravished with worldly hopes when things are likely to go well, and account no pains too great in worldly pursuits; but you hate to pray in secret; have no heart for God; can take no delight in him; and God knows it. And will you now pretend, for your excuse, that you cannot help your heart's being so bad, when it is you yourself that are so bad, and love to be so bad, and hate to cease to be what you are? If God has, by his Spirit, awakened your conscience a little, and terrified you with the fears of hell and wrath, it may be your corruptions are somewhat stunned, and honor and worldly gains do not appear so tempting, and you are ready to say that you would willingly part with your reputation, and every thing you have in the world, for an interest in Christ and the divine favor; and now you think you are sincere; but God knows it is all hypocrisy; for he sees you do not care for him, but are only afraid of damnation. And God knows that, if once you should get a false confidence of pardon and the divine favor, you would soon return to folly, as the dog to his vomit, and set out after the world as eagerly as ever; or else vent your corruptions in spiritual pride, and in ranting, enthusiastic wild-fire, and party selfish zeal, as thousands have done, who once felt just as you do now. God, therefore, does not mind your pretences, nor believe your promises; for he knows what you are. You may deceive yourself, but cannot deceive him. He knows your corruptions are stunned, but not mortified; and that your nature is just what it was, and you as really an enemy to God as ever. And, it may be, you may see it yet, when you come to find out how God looks upon you, and upon your prayers, and tears, and promises; for it is commonly the case with sinners, when they perceive that God is not pleased with their devout pretences, and does not design to save them for their hypocritical duties, by the secret workings of their hearts to discover that they care only for themselves, and are real enemies to God and his law. Love to God, O sinner, is not begotten by the fears of hell, nor by the hopes of heaven. If

you do not love God for what he is in himself, you do not love him at all; but only flatter him with your lips, and lie unto him with your tongue. But it may be manifest to you that you do not love him for what he is in himself, because you do not love his law, which bears his image. You do not like the law as a rule for you to live by, for it is too strict for you; and you do not approve of the law as a rule for God to judge you by, for you think it hard for God to damn men for the least sin. Know it, therefore, O sinner, that there is no good in you, or any goodness in your duties; but you are in a state of rebellion; an enemy to God, and to his holy law; come down, and lie in the dust before the Lord, and own the sentence just by which you stand condemned, and be quiet at his feet; and if ever he saves you, forever attribute it wholly to free and sovereign grace. "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." And such a one was you, O believer; and, in some measure, you are such a one still; and, in some respects, your sins are a great deal more aggravated. O, never forget the days, and weeks, and months, and years you have formerly spent in sin! "Once I was a persecutor, and a blasphemer, and injurious," said St. Paul; and his heart bleeds afresh, and he sets himself down for the chief of sinners. (1 Tim. i. 13, 15.) But what are you now, after all the grace of God; after all the kind methods Heaven has taken to reclaim you; and what are your attainments, if you compare yourself and attainments with the holy law of God, in its spiritual nature and divine strictness? Do you feel such a heart towards the great and glorious Governor of the whole world, as becomes you? Think what a God he is, and how angels and saints on high love him. Think of his majesty, and greatness, and glory, and excellence; and how he is the fear, and delight, and joy of all heaven. Think of his original and entire right to you, and absolute authority over you. Think of the vileness of your apostasy, and of the depth of your ruin. Think of redeeming love. Think of converting grace. Think of the many means God has used with you in his providence, and by his Spirit. Think of all his loving kindnesses and tender mercies. And think what a beast you are before the Lord! Lie down in the dust, and cry, and mourn, and weep, and let your heart break! O, your want of love to God; of zeal for his glory; of delight in his perfections, and of gratitude for all his kindness! Alas! how you disesteem the God that angels love, and comparatively despise the God that all heaven adores! Alas! how careless you are about his honor and interest, and how inactive in his service! Alas! how you

disrelish the fountain of all goodness, and the ocean of all blessedness, and hanker after other things, and go away from God, to seek rest elsewhere, and thereby cast infinite contempt upon the delight of heaven, and the joy of angels, the ever-blessed and all-sufficient God! Think of the peculiar obligations God has laid you under by all the secret ways of his providence and grace with you, and of all the infinite pains he has taken with you to make you humble; weaned from the world; devoted to God; loving, kind, tender-hearted, friendly, and obliging to all mankind, and universally holy; and see, and say, "Was ever wretch so vile! Did ever wretch treat such a God in such a manner, under such circumstances!" O, how far, how infinitely far, you are from being what you ought to be! This made St. Paul account himself less than the least of all saints, and forget the things that are behind: his attainments dwindled away, as it were, to nothing, when he compared himself with God's holy law, and thought what he ought to be, and what obligations he was under; and he did, therefore, as it were, set down all that he had hitherto attained for nothing, and feel and act as if he was but just now beginning to live to God. "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." "O wretched man that I am!" "I forget the things which are behind; I reach forth towards those things which are before; I press towards the mark:" and, O believer! go you, and do likewise.

Besides, remember that it is no thanks to you that you are not to this day secure in sin; yea, that you are not one of the vilest and most profane creatures in the world. Your nature was bad enough; the seeds of every sin were in your heart; but for restraining or sanctifying grace, you might have been as bad as any in Sodom. And what was it moved God to awaken you, and stop you in your career in sin, and turn you to God? Was it for your righteousness? O, be ashamed and confounded forever! For his own sake he has done it, when you was a stubborn, stiff-necked, rebellious creature. And truly, what has been your carriage towards the Lord, compared with the exact rule of duty, the holy law of God, since the day you have known him? O, remember Massah, and Tabera, and Kibroth-hattaavah, and how you have been rebellious against the Lord, ever since he has taken you in hand to subdue you to himself. Read Deut. ix., and see how much your temper has been like theirs. And this notwithstanding all the signs and wonders God has wrought before your eyes; I mean, notwithstanding all the sweet and awful methods God has taken with you, to make you know him, and love him,

and fear him, and live to him. There are thousands and thousands whom God never took any such special pains with: their sins are not like yours. Come down therefore; sit in the dust; mourn and weep, and loathe and abhor yourself, as long as you live; and ascribe all praise to God, through whose grace alone it is that you are what you are.

Let me here address you in the words of the famous Mr. Hooker: "That thou mayest forever, each day that passeth over thy head, remember it to the Lord, and leave it upon record in thine own conscience, say, Hadst thou, blessed Lord, given me the desires of my heart, and left me to my own will, it is certain I had been in hell long before this day, when, in the days of my folly and times of my ignorance; when, out of the desperate wretchedness of my rebellious disposition, I was running riot in the ways of wickedness; when I said to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy not; to Christians, to acquaintance, to governors, admonish not, counsel not, reprove not, stop me not in the pursuit of sin. The time was, I took hold of deceit, and refused to return; nay, resolved in the secret purpose of my heart, I would none of thee; I would not have that word of thine reveal or remove my corruptions; I would none of thy grace that might humble me and purge me; none of that mercy of thine that might pardon me; none of that redemption of thine that might save me. Hadst thou then taken me at my word, and given me what I wished, and sealed my destruction, saying, 'Be thou forever filthy, forever stubborn, and forever miserable; thou wouldst neither be holy nor happy; thou shalt have thy will; sin with devils, and take thy portion with devils.' Lord, it had been just with thee, and I justly miserable. But to bear with all my baseness; to put up with all those wrongs and provocations; to strive with me for my good, when I took up arms against thee, and strove against my own good; nay, when I resisted mercy; and then to take away that resistance, and to cause me to take mercy, and make it mine, when I used all the skill I could to hinder my own salvation,—O, the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of this mercy! When we feel our hearts to be puffed up with the vain apprehension of our own worth, parts, or performances; what we are and what we do, look we back to our first beginnings, and judge aright of our own wretchedness and nothingness, yea, worse than nothing, in that we not only wanted all good, but we had it within us to oppose all good; and that will cause us to sit down in silence, abased forever. When empty bladders are grown unto too great bulk and bigness, to prick them is the

readiest way to lessen them; when our empty and vain minds swell with high thoughts, and high, over-weaning conceit of our own worth, learn we to stab and pierce our hearts with the righteous judgment of our own natural vileness, which will, or at least may, let out that frothy haughtiness that lifts us up beyond our measure. Tell thy heart, and commune with thy conscience, and say, It is not my good nature that I am not roaring amongst the wretches of the world, in the road and broad way of ruin and destruction; that I am not wallowing in all manner of sin with the worst of men. It is not my good nature, no thanks to any thing that I have, that I am not upon the chain with malefactors, or in a dungeon with witches; for whatever hell hath, it is in this heart of mine naturally; a Cain here, a Judas here, nay, a devil here. The time was, — O that, with an abased heart, I may ever think of that time! — I never looked after the spiritual good of my soul, or whether I had a soul or no; what would become of me, and it was the least of my care; the farthest end of my thoughts; nay, loath was I to hear of or know these things; when they were revealed, unwilling to receive them, or give way to them when they were offered. How did I stop mine ears, shut mine eyes, and harden my heart! What ways, means, and devices did I use and invent, to shut out the light of truth; to stop the passage and power of the word, that it might not convince me; that it might not reform me; might not recall me from my evil ways! How often have I secretly wished that either the word was taken out of the place, or I from it, that it might not trouble me in my sinful distempers; and when I had least good, I had most ease, and took the greatest content. O that such a wretch should thus live and yet live! To be thus sinful! O that I might be forever abased for it." *

Thus the law, as a rule of life, may be improved to the humiliation of the people of God, in that it may serve to keep fresh in their minds their native universal depravity; their former wickedness; and to discover their remaining sinfulness. And I may here observe, that it is believers' peculiar acquaintance with the law, in its true meaning, strictness, and purity, that is the occasion of their peculiar acquaintance with their own hearts. And while the law daily shows them what they are, it learns them more and more their need of a Redeemer and Sanctifier, and daily puts them upon going to God, through Jesus Christ, for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace. The law makes way for the gospel; and a sense

* Mr. Hooker's Application of Redemption. Vol. I. p. 97—100.

of sin, weakness, and unworthiness, makes Christ and gospel grace precious, and stirs up a man to repentance, faith, and prayer. Deluded, therefore, are those poor souls that say, "We must not look into our hearts, nor labor after a sense of our sins and sinfulness; for that is legal, and tends to discouragement; but we must look only to Christ and free grace, and believe and rejoice, and a sense of the love of Christ will humble us." Just as if the great business of Christ was, to keep men from a sight and sense of their sins; and just as if a man could be truly humbled, without seeing what he is, compared with God and his holy law. But, poor souls! they feel a legal, discouraged frame always, when they have any sight and sense of their sinfulness, and it damps their faith, and if they were but thoroughly sensible of their sinfulness, it would kill their faith and joy; and, therefore, they conclude it is not a good way to look into their hearts; no good can be got by it. But when they do not mind their hearts, but look steadily to Christ and free grace,—a fancied Christ!—firmly believing that all he has done and suffered is for them, and realizing the matter to themselves, now they feel sweetly and joyfully; and therefore conclude that this is the way, the only way, to get good for our souls; and hence grow mighty enemies to the law, to self-examination, to sense of sin, etc. This is the door by which, if any man enters in, he will soon become an Antinomian and an enthusiast. But to proceed:—

Use IV. Of thankfulness. While the law shows us what we are, it does, at the same time, make us sensible what we deserve; while it discovers to us our sinfulness, it makes us feel our unworthiness of any good, and desert of all evil; and while we feel our unworthiness and ill deserts, our afflictions appear far less than we deserve, and our mercies appear more in number than the sands, and the kindness and bounty of our God appears exceedingly great, and we wonder at his goodness, and bless his holy name. And thus the law is of use to promote thankfulness.

God, the great Governor of the world, in testimony of his high displeasure against mankind for their apostasy from him, has spread miseries and calamities all round the earth. From the king upon the throne to the beggar on the dunghill there is not one but has a greater or lesser share in the troubles of life; and many have their days filled up with sorrows. And now murmurings arise all round this guilty world, and the general cry is, "Nobody meets with such troubles as I do. I am very hardly dealt with." But the law teaches us that God

is holy in all these his ways, and righteous in all these his works; and that we are all punished far less than we deserve; and so our complaints are silenced, and our hearts quieted into humble submission, and it appears infinitely fit, a rebellious world should be full of woe, that we might learn that it is an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord.

But, at the same time, God, the great Lord of all, out of his boundless goodness through Jesus Christ, reprieves mankind from the threatened ruin; strews common mercies with a liberal hand all round the earth; sends rain and fruitful seasons, and fills the hearts of all, more or less, with food and gladness; and to some he grants his special grace, makes them his children, and entitles them to eternal life. And thus he is the Savior of all men, but especially of those that believe. Yet this goodness of God is but little taken notice of in the world. But the law, while it discovers what we are, and how unworthy and hell-deserving we are, makes us sensible of the freeness and riches of God's grace in these kindnesses. For, while we feel that hell is our proper due, every thing that renders our case better than that of the damned, we shall accept as a choice mercy, and as an effect of free grace; and so, instead of being always in a murmuring and repining disposition, we shall be always wondering at the goodness, admiring at the kindness, of the Lord; saying, with good Jacob, "We are not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servants;" and with the Jewish church, "O, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever." And we shall always find that the more sensible we are of our unworthiness and ill desert, the more cause we shall see for thankfulness, let our outward circumstances in this life be what they will. But,

Use V. In the last place, let all that has been said be improved, by way of exhortation, to excite and engage the people of God more and more to renounce themselves, the world, and sin, and give up themselves to God, to love him, and live to him, and delight in him, with all their hearts, forever.

You have seen what grounds you have to do so, arising from God's infinite greatness, glory, and excellence; and you have been viewing your superadded obligations. And is the Lord such a God, and is he your God and Redeemer? O, how strongly are you bound to keep all his commandments! And what is it, O believer, that the Lord thy God requireth of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart,

and with all thy soul? And is there not, in keeping his commands, a great reward? Did you ever taste such sweetness as in a life of devotedness to God? And have not your wanderings from him cost you many a bitter and mournful hour? O, how happy would you be, if once you could come to it, to have done with every thing else, and to be wholly the Lord's! Seriously consider these things: —

1. That you can come to it, to have done with every thing else, and be wholly the Lord's, at least in a vastly greater degree than ever yet you have. (Phil. iii. 13, 14.) You actually already have God working in you to will and to do. He has always been, as it were, laboring to humble you, and wean you from the world, and bring you nearer to himself, to love him, live to him, and delight in him, ever since the day you first came to know him, by the outward dispensations of his providence, and by the inward strivings of his Spirit. He has always been "purging you, that you might bring forth more fruit." Yea, this was the very design of Christ's coming into the world, that he "might deliver you out of the hands of all your enemies, and bring you to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of your life;" and that he "might redeem you from all iniquity, and purify you to himself, that you might be peculiarly his, and zealous of good works." And for this end, God has already taken, as it were, infinite pains with you, and this is what he is continually urging you unto, and he declares that he is readier to give you his Holy Spirit, than earthly parents are to give bread to their children, and invites, and encourages, and commands you to ask. (Matt. vii. 7, etc.) And will you not now, therefore, arise, and put on the whole armor of God, and make your strongest efforts to recover from sin to God?

God, the great King of heaven and earth, commands you to do so; Jesus, the kind Mediator, invites you to do so; and the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, is ready to help you. Arise, therefore, and be of good courage, for the Lord is with you. Did you ever stir up yourself to seek after God in vain, or set about a life of greater seriousness, watchfulness, and prayer, and find no advantage by it? Or have you not always said, in the conclusion, that "it is good for me to draw near to God;" and condemned and hated yourself for your former slackness, and been ready to resolve, from your inmost soul, that you would "call upon the Lord as long as you live"?

And let me put it to your conscience, do not you believe, that, if now you would gird up the loins of your mind, and quit yourself like a man, and be strong, that, through Christ's

strengthening of you, you may do all things? And shall carelessness or stupidity; shall laziness and sloth; shall the allurements or the discouragements of the world or the devil, now, after all, hinder you? What! when you have been redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God; when your prison door is flung open, and your chains knocked off, and you called and invited to come out into the glorious liberty of the children of God, and when God is actually striving with you already, and stands ready to afford you further help, what, now be hindered! What, and be hindered by carelessness, unwatchfulness, etc.! What, shall the Savior groan in the garden, and die on the cross, and yet you lie sleeping here! What, asleep! What, content without God in the world! What, when the whole army of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, have fasted and prayed all their days, and waded through a sea of blood at last! Methinks you had better abandon every mortal delight, lay aside every weight and the sin that more easily besets you, and mourn, and weep, and watch, and pray, and fight, and strive, as long as you live, than act so far beneath the dignity and character of a Christian.

It is but a few in the world that truly know God, and the way of access to him, through Jesus Christ, and are in a spiritual capacity to live a life of devotedness to God, and communion with him; most men are dead in sin. But you hath he quickened, and you are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; and it is God's design you should walk in them; you that were without Christ, and without God in the world, afar off, are now brought nigh; and you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God: for this cause I therefore beseech you, walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. See this argument enlarged upon in the second, third, and fourth chapters of the Epistles to the Ephesians, and your duties still more particularly delineated in the fifth and sixth.

2. Consider, that as your case is circumstanced, it is absolutely impossible for you ever to find any other resting-place but God, or ever take any satisfying comfort of your life, but in a way of devotedness to God and communion with him. The case is not with you, O believer, as it is with other men. "You, only, have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities," said God to his ancient people. But the other nations of the earth might worship idols, and serve wood and stone, and go on and prosper, without being called to a present account; and so it is as to particular persons. Bastards, who have no parents to own them

and bring them up, may, as for any restraints from parental authority, do what they will. They that do not belong to God's family, may live from home as long as they please, and, because they have no interest in his house, may, in respect of divine permission, go and live where they please; may continue to lie out from God: but "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Hypocrites may lose their religion, and lie dead whole months and years together, and return with the dog to his vomit, and take as much comfort in the world and their lusts as ever; but it is impossible that you should; you can never get your conscience asleep as other men's are, or your heart content to lie out from God, or wring yourself out of your Father's hand, or get out of the reach of his rod.

Solomon once seemed resolved to find another resting-place for his heart besides God, and something else to take comfort in, and he was under the best outward advantages to make a thorough trial that ever man was; but he never did and never could; but was always like a bone out of joint, or like the needle of a compass turned aside from its beloved star. "Vanity of vanities," says the preacher, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." And poor David, how was he pained with anguish of spirit for the sin whereby he provoked the Lord! "While I kept silence"—that is, before Nathan came, who brought me to an open confession,—"my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." And never did a believer depart from God to seek another resting-place, or go away from the fountain of living waters to get something else to take comfort in; but God "hedged up his way with thorns, and made a wall, that he could not find his paths." So that, although he "followed after his lovers, he never overtook them;" and though he sought them, he never found them; but, at last, has been constrained to say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now." "His backslidings have reproved him, and his wickedness has corrected him, and made him know, to the breaking of his heart, that it is an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord." For as God thus dealt with the Jewish church of old, so he does with every believer; for all God's dealings with them "were for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

And this now being the case, O believer, and you having always by your own experience found it so, will you, notwithstanding, forsake the Lord? What fault, what iniquity do you

find in God, that you should forsake him? Has he been a wilderness unto you, or a land of darkness? Or has he not been your Father, ever since the day he took you by the hand to lead you, even ever since the day you first knew him? Or are you weary of lightsome, of sweet and happy days, and impatient to plunge yourself into darkness, distress, and anguish? May you not expect, if you forsake him and go away from him, to seek another resting-place, and something else to take comfort in as your portion, that he will strip you naked as in the day that you was born, and make you desolate, and a terror to yourself, and that his anger will smoke against you, and his hand lie heavy upon you? And then will you mourn like the dove in the valley, and be troubled, and go bowed down greatly, and roar by reason of the disquietness of your heart, and wish a thousand and thousand times that you had never forsaken the Lord. (Psalm xxxviii. Jer. ii. iii. Hos. ii.) Will you not, therefore, bid adieu to all other lords and lovers, and cleave unto the Lord with all your heart forever? for this is your wisdom, and this is your life. Which brings me to add—

Consider, if you will have done with every thing else, and give up yourself to the Lord, to love him, and live to him, and be wholly his, then God will be your God sensibly, and you will, in spiritual respects, be one of the happiest creatures in this world; a hundred times happier than you could possibly be in the ways of sin; "you shall have a hundred fold in this present world, besides eternal life in the world to come. "If any man love me," says Christ, "and keep my commandments, I will love him and manifest myself unto him: and I and my Father will come and make our abode with him." "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." And God will be your dwelling-place forever. While the nations dash themselves in pieces, and all the world is in confusion, and while you pass through the fire and through the water, God will be with you; and he will always be your light, life, peace, joy, glory, and blessedness, in this undone, dreadful world; and your heart will be firm and fixed, like Mount Zion, that cannot be removed, but abideth forever; and nothing shall ever separate you from the love of God, neither things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor life, nor death, nor any other thing. And God will certainly give you every thing in this world that is best for you, and most for his glory, and you will not desire any more; and all the evil things you may pass through will sensibly work together for your good. (Matt. vi. 33. Rom. viii. 28—39. Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.)

And thus you have, by experience, always found that God has dealt with you. I appeal, O believer, to your own conscience, that thus it has always been, whenever you have sensibly from the heart renounced all other things, and given up yourself to the Lord, to love him, and to live to him, and to take content in him, God has sensibly been a God and Father, and portion unto you, and has given you all things, which, every thing considered, you could desire, and sensibly made all things work together for your good; whence you have been many a time ready to say, "That not a word of all his promises has ever fallen to the ground." And you have actually enjoyed a hundred times more comfort in the service of God, in devotedness to God, and communion with him, than could have been had in the service of sin. And will you not now, therefore, be entirely and forever the Lord's? O, how happy you might be! And what blessed days you might enjoy!

4. And that which cannot but touch a filial heart, consider, that if you will thus be wholly the Lord's, to love him, and live to him, and delight in him, and to do his will, God will be glorified thereby: it will be to his honor in the world. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." God has but few friends in the world. Many that pretend to be his friends, are a great dishonor to him, and disgrace to religion. By their means his name is blasphemed, and his ways are evilly spoken of; and, in general, his honor is every where trodden down in the dust. And can you stand by unconcerned? yea, can you look on without your heart bleeding within you? O, therefore, be serious; be humble; be meek, holy, and heavenly; be peace-makers, and merciful; be kind and tender-hearted, condescending and obliging, and abound in every good work; for you are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. O, therefore, live so, as that your Father which is in heaven may be glorified. (Matt. v. 13—16.)

To conclude: Will you not now, therefore, determine from this day forward to be wholly the Lord's, and from this day begin to live to God in better earnest than ever? God is ready to help you. You will, as to present comfort, be undone, if you do not live to God; and peace, and glory, and blessedness is before you, if you do; and God, even your God, will be glorified. And if you are now ready, by the grace of God, to hearken unto this advice, then take these two directions: —

1. "Lay aside every weight, and the sins which more easily beset you." In a serious and sweet hour, when you get alone, and mourn, and pray, and give up yourself to God, and think and resolve you will now be forever the Lord's, you are wont, upon self-examination, and a review of past times, to see and say, "This, that, and the other thing, has been the sinful occasion, time after time, of my losing a serious, gracious frame of heart; and by such and such sinful means I have gradually lost a sense of divine and eternal things, and so have wandered from God, and laid a foundation for darkness and sorrow. O my carelessness! O that I had prayed more in secret! O that I had spent precious time better," etc. These now are the weights, and these the sins which easily beset you; and these you must lay aside forever, if you design to be the Lord's indeed, and to make a business of religion to purpose. But perhaps you will say, "My worldly business, my necessary cares, and the common duties of life, are sometimes the very things, and these I ought not to lay aside; and what shall I do in this case?" I answer, that, at another time, the necessary cares, business, and duties of life, you find to be no hinderances at all; even at such times when you do all out of love to God and for God, with singleness of heart. If you will, therefore, but always go about the common duties of life in such a manner, they will never be any clog to you. What you have, therefore, to do in the case, is not to lay aside that which is your duty, but to lay aside your wrong ends and aims; and thus you must lay aside every weight. But,

2. If you design to be religious in good earnest, then be careful to use all proper means, and do every proper thing that has a tendency to promote your spiritual life; every proper thing, I say, to guard against those anti-scriptural methods which enthusiasts are wont to take, and by which, above all things, their false affections are promoted, but which have a direct tendency to kill the divine life. In a serious hour of sweet retirement, and in happy days, when you are nearest to God, and enjoy most communion with him, and have your senses most accurate to discern between good and evil, you are wont to see and say, "O, how blessed I might be, if I did always keep in this narrow way which now lies open plain before me! If I were always serious, watchful, prayerful; always reading, or meditating, and looking to God, and keeping my heart and improving every precious moment of my time wisely for God," etc. Well, well, O believer, this is the way: walk in it, and you shall be like a tree planted by the

rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, whose leaf never withers; and whatsoever you do shall prosper. And, after a few more days, and weeks, and months, and years spent in prayer, and faith, and holiness, in this your pilgrimage state, you shall come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and dwell forever with the Lord. Amen.

"Now, the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

TRUE RELIGION DELINEATED.

DISCOURSE II.

SHOWING THE NATURE OF THE GOSPEL, AND OF A GENUINE COMPLIANCE WITH IT.

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

John iii. 16.

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE grand question before us is, What is true religion? And this is the general answer: It consists in a real conformity to the law, and in a genuine compliance with the gospel. What is implied in a real conformity to the law, has been already shown in the former Discourse; and we come now to consider wherein a genuine compliance with the gospel does consist. From our Savior's mouth we had before a brief summary of the law; and now, from our Savior's mouth we have a brief summary of the gospel, in these comprehensive words, "God so loved the world," etc.

Nicodemus came to him for instruction, believing him to be a teacher sent from God. Our Savior begins immediately to inculcate upon him the necessity of regeneration and faith. We are sinners; are naturally dead in sin; and, therefore, must be born again — be recovered to the divine image in the temper of our minds, and so be made spiritually alive. We are guilty; we need pardoning mercy at the hands of the great Governor of the world: but he will grant it only through the Mediator he has appointed: in him, therefore, must we believe; on his merits and mediation must we depend. Nicodemus could hardly understand the doctrine of the new birth; and our Savior intimates that the mysteries of our

redemption, by the blood of Christ, were like to be still more difficult to him. We can easily understand worldly things, for they are agreeable to the temper of our minds, and suit the taste and relish of our hearts; for we are blind to things spiritual and divine; are slow of heart to understand them, they not suiting the temper and relish of their hearts, and we being in a disposition to disrelish things of such a nature; therefore our Savior observes to Nicodemus, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." We are in a state of rebellion; at enmity against God, and under his wrath; and yet ready, through our darkness, to flatter ourselves that all is well; and so are secure and at ease. Light is come into the world, discovering our disease and our remedy, but we love our disease, and loathe the remedy; and, therefore, hate the light, and will not come to it. And thus our Savior teaches Nicodemus wherein true religion consists, and points out the aversion of mankind to it. Nor is there any thing that will discover our aversion so plainly as to set true religion in its own light; for when we see clearly what it is, we may perceive how we stand affected towards it; but otherwise we may be easily mistaken; may imagine that we love true religion, when, indeed, we only love the false image we have framed in our own fancy. Regeneration and faith, these two great essentials, wherein all religion radically consists, are the things our Savior inculcates upon his new disciple. Christ loved to lay the foundation well. He was not fond of converts, unless their conversion was sound. And indeed, all our religion is good for nothing, if our nature be not renewed; and all our communion with God is but fancy, if we are strangers to Christ; for he is "the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by him." But to proceed to the words of the text, "God so loved the world," etc.

God, that is, God the Father, the first person in the ever-blessed Trinity, who sustains the dignity and majesty of Godhead, and is eminently "Lord of heaven and earth," and prime agent in the works of creation and providence; in governing the world; in redeeming, sanctifying, and saving of sinners. (Rom. xi. 36.) That there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one God, the Scriptures do abundantly teach. (Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 13. 1 John v. 7.) And this doctrine we must believe, or we cannot understand the gospel. How they are three, and how they are one, is not revealed, nor is it necessary for us to know; but that there are three per-

sons in the Godhead, and yet but one God, we must believe; and what characters they sustain, and what parts they act in the affair of our salvation, we must understand. The gospel represents God the Father as sovereign Lord of heaven and earth; as righteous Governor of the world; as giving laws to his creatures; as revealing his wrath against all transgressions. He is represented as being injured and offended by our sins, and concerned to maintain the honor of his majesty; of his law and government, and sacred authority. He is represented as having designs of mercy towards a sinful, guilty, ruined world; and as contriving and proposing a method of recovery. He is represented as one seated on a throne of grace, reconcilable through Jesus Christ, and seeking to reconcile the world to himself by Christ, ordering pardon and peace to be proclaimed through a guilty world, to any and all who will return to him in the way prescribed. The gospel represents God the Son as being constituted Mediator by his Father, that, in and by him, he might open a way to accomplish his designs of mercy towards a guilty world, consistent with the honor of his majesty; of his holiness and justice; of his law and government. His Father appointed him to the office, and he freely undertook it. His Father sent him into this world to enter upon the difficult work, and he willingly came. "He was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Here he lived, and here he died, in the capacity of a Mediator. He arose; he ascended into heaven, and sits now at his Father's right hand, God-Man Mediator, exalted to the highest honor; made Lord of all things, and Judge of the world. And now we are to have access to God by him, as our Mediator, High Priest, Intercessor, and Advocate, who has made complete atonement for sins in the days of his abasement, and has now sufficient interest in the court of heaven. The gospel represents God the Holy Ghost as being sent of the Father as prime agent, and by the Son as Mediator, in the character of an enlightener and sanctifier, in order to bring sinners effectually to see and be sensible of their sin, guilt, and ruin; to believe the gospel; to trust in Christ, and to return home to God through him. And it is his office to dwell in believers; to teach and lead them; to sanctify, quicken, strengthen, and comfort them, and to keep them through faith unto salvation. The Father is God by nature, and God by office. The Son is God by nature, and Mediator by office. The Spirit is God by nature, and Sanctifier by office. The Father, as Governor, Lawgiver, Judge, and Avenger, has all power in heaven and earth, in and of himself. (Matt. xi. 25.) The Son, as Mediator, derives

all his authority from the Father. (Matt. xi. 27.) The Holy Spirit acts as being sent by them both; by the Father, as supreme Governor, dealing with a sinful, guilty world, through a Mediator; by the Son, as Mediator, negotiating a reconciliation between God and man. (John xiv. 16.) The Father maintains the honor of the Godhead, and of his government, and displays his grace, while he ordains that sin shall be punished, the sinner humbled, and brought back to God, and into a subjection to his will, and in that way be pardoned, and finally saved. Sin is punished in the Son, as Mediator, standing in the room of the guilty; and the sinner is humbled, brought back to God, and into a subjection to his will, by the Holy Spirit; and in this way is pardoned and saved. And thus the Son and the Spirit honor the Father, as supreme Governor, and all join in the same design to discountenance sin, humble the sinner, and glorify grace. Thus far briefly of the doctrine of the Trinity. Right apprehensions of God help us to understand the law, and right apprehensions of the Trinity will help us to understand the gospel. Not how they are three persons, and yet but one God, the manner of which is not needful to be known; but the offices and characters they sustain, and the different parts they act in the great affair of saving sinners. "God," says the text, "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" that is, God the Father, the great Governor of the world, whom we had offended by sin.

"So *loved* the world;" that is, with a love of benevolence. Esteem us he could not; for we were worthless and vile. To delight in us it was impossible; for we were altogether odious and abominable. But to have a good will towards us, or a will to do us good, this he might have, although we were sinful and guilty. Not, indeed, from any motive in us; for if we were viewed, and our temper and circumstances considered, there was not to be seen one motive to pity, no, not the least; but every motive to indignation and wrath. However, from motives within himself, he might will to do us good, notwithstanding our sin and guilt. The self-moving goodness of his nature did excite him, from the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, to design mercy towards a sinful, guilty, ruined world. "God so loved the world."

"The world;" that is, all mankind — all the posterity of Adam. For what follows is evidently true of every individual: "that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"So loved," that is, so inconceivably, so unspeakably —

"That he gave his only-begotten Son;" that is, of his mere, pure goodness, constituted him to be a Mediator; appointed him to be a Redeemer and Savior, to make atonement for sin, and purchase divine favors, and so to open a way for sinners to return to God with safety, and for God to show mercy to them with honor. "God so loved the world," that is, all the race of Adam, that he gave his only-begotten Son, immediately upon the apostasy of mankind; for then was this seed of the woman promised, (Gen. iii. 15,) that all, being by nature children of wrath, might be prevented by divine goodness. God saw all involved in sin, and guilt, and ruin, by Adam's first sin. And so he provided a Savior for all: that "whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Should not perish." He viewed all mankind as sinful and guilty, lost, undone, and perishing; that is, exposed to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. And he gave his only-begotten Son to be a Savior —

"That whosoever believeth in him;" that is, that ventures upon his atonement, his worth and merits, his mediation and intercession, for divine acceptance; so as to be thence emboldened to return home to God, upon the invitation of the gospel; that all such should not perish, but —

"Have everlasting life;" that is, the everlasting indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as a sanctifier and comforter, to be a never-failing spring of a new, a spiritual, and divine life; everlasting union and communion with Christ, and the everlasting favor and enjoyment of God through him.

Thus we have, in these words, a brief view of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. And from them we may learn, 1. That God, the great Governor of the world, considered mankind as being in a perishing condition; that is, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone. 2. That it was merely from motives within himself, that he has done what he has for their recovery out of this state. 3. That he has constituted his Son a Mediator, Redeemer, and Savior, that through him sinners might be saved. 4. That he has appointed faith in Christ to be the condition of salvation. Here, therefore, I will endeavor to show, —

I. Upon what grounds it was that God, the great Governor of the world, did consider mankind as being in a perishing condition; that is, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone.

II. What were the motives which excited him to do what he has done for their recovery.

III. What necessity there was of a Mediator and Redeemer, and how the way to life has been opened by him whom God has provided.

IV. What is the true nature of saving faith in him. And so, by the whole, to explain the nature of the gospel, and of a genuine compliance therewith. And in the last place, —

V. Will consider the promise of everlasting life to those who believe.

SECTION I.

SHOWING THE REASONS WHY GOD DOES, IN THE GOSPEL, CONSIDER MANKIND AS BEING IN A PERISHING CONDITION.

I. I AM to show upon what grounds it was, that God, the great Governor of the world, did consider mankind as being in a perishing condition; that is, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone. That he did consider mankind as being in a perishing condition, is evident, because he gave his only-begotten Son, that they might not perish who should believe in him. If we were not in a perishing condition, his giving his Son to save us from perdition, had been needless; and his pretending great love and kindness in doing so, had been to affront us; to make as if we were undone creatures, when we were not; and as if we were much beholden to him for his goodness, when we could have done well enough without it; and the more he pretends of his great love and kindness, the greater must the affront be. So that however we look upon ourselves, it is certain that God, who sees all things as being what they are, did actually look upon us as in a perishing, lost, undone condition. And if he considered us as being in such a condition, it must have been because he looked upon us as sinful, guilty, justly condemned, and altogether helpless; for otherwise we were not in a perishing condition. If we could have helped ourselves a little, we should not have needed one to save us, but only to help us to save ourselves; but our salvation, in Scripture, is always attributed wholly to God; and God every where takes all the glory to himself, as though, in every deed, he had deserved it all, (Eph. i. 3—6; ii. 1—9;) so that it is certain God did look upon mankind as being in a perishing condition, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, and altogether helpless; and considering us in such a condition, he entered upon his designs of mercy and grace; and therefore he every

where magnifies his love, and looks upon us as infinitely beholden to him, and under infinite obligations to ascribe to him all the glory and praise, even quite all: "That no flesh should glory in his presence; but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

It is of great importance, therefore, that we come to look upon ourselves as being in such a perishing condition too; for otherwise it is impossible we should ever be in a disposition thankfully to accept gospel grace, as it is offered unto us. We shall rather be offended, as thinking the gospel casts reproach upon human nature, in supposing us to be in such a forlorn condition as to stand in a perishing need of having so much done for us; as the Jews of old scorned it, when Christ told them, if they would become his disciples, they should know the truth, and the truth should make them free. They took it as an affront, and were ready to say, "What! Just as if we were in bondage! Indeed, no. We were never in bondage to any man; we have Abraham to our father, and God is our Father; but thou hast a devil." They would not understand him; they were all in a rage: and so it is like to be with us, with regard to the methods which God has taken with us in the gospel, unless we look upon ourselves as he does; so wretched and miserable; so poor, blind, and naked; so helpless, lost, and undone. It is the want of this self-acquaintance, together with a fond notion of our being in a much better case than we are, that raises such a mighty cry against the doctrines of grace, through a proud, impenitent, guilty world.

And since God does thus look upon us to be in such a perishing condition, and upon this supposition enters on his designs of mercy and grace, here now, therefore, does the question recur, — Upon what grounds is it that he considers us as being in such a perishing condition? Grounds he must have, and good grounds too, or he would never thus look upon us. If we may rightly understand what they are, perhaps we may come to look upon ourselves as he does; and then the grace of the gospel will begin to appear to us in the same light it does to him. — The grounds, then, are the following: —

1. God, the great Governor of the world, does, in the gospel, consider mankind as being guilty of Adam's first sin, and, on that account, to be in a perishing condition. "In Adam all died," but "death is the wages of sin," therefore in Adam all sinned; for "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," that is, sinned in Adam; for "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." And accordingly, "by the

offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" and hence all are "by nature children of wrath."

Obj. But how can we be guilty of Adam's first sin? It was he committed it, and not we; and that without our consent, and a long time before we were born.

Ans. Adam, by divine appointment, stood and acted as our public head. He stood a representative in the room of all his posterity; and accordingly acted not only for himself, but for them. His sustaining this character rendered him a type of Christ, the second Adam, who has laid down his life in the room and stead of sinners. And his being spoken of in Scripture as a type of Christ, with respect to this character of a public head, proves that he did actually sustain such a character. (Rom. v. 14.) And, therefore, as by the obedience of Christ many are made righteous, so by the disobedience of Adam, many are made sinners; that is, by the imputation of Christ's obedience, believers become legally righteous; righteous in the sight of God, by virtue of an established constitution; and so have the reward of eternal life. So, by the imputation of Adam's first sin, his posterity, by ordinary generation, became legally sinners; sinners in the sight of God, by virtue of an established constitution, and so are exposed to the punishment of eternal death, the proper wages of sin. Now, it is true, we did not personally rise in rebellion against God in that first transgression; but he who did do it was our representative. We are members of the community he acted for, and God considers us as such; and therefore looks upon us as being legally guilty, and liable to be dealt with accordingly; and so, on this account, in a perishing condition. But perhaps some will still be ready to say, "And where is the justice of all this?" Methinks the following considerations, if we will be disinterestedly impartial, may set the matter in a satisfying light:—

(1.) That the original constitution made with Adam, as to himself personally considered, was holy, just, and good.

(2.) That if all his posterity had been put under the same constitution, one by one, from age to age, as they came into being, to act for themselves, it had also been holy, just, and good.

(3.) That it was, in the nature of the thing, in all respects, as well for our interests that Adam should be made our public head and representative, to act not only for himself, but for all his posterity, as that we should each stand and act for himself singly; and, in some respects, better.

(4.) That in such a case, God, as supreme Lord and sovereign Governor of the whole world, had full power and right-

ful authority to constitute Adam our common head and public representative, to act in our behalf. Let us, therefore, distinctly consider these particulars.

(1.) It is to be noted, the original constitution made with Adam, (Gen. ii. 17,) as to himself personally considered, was holy, just, and good, as will appear if we consider the circumstances he was under, antecedent to that constitution or covenant. For,

In the first place, antecedent to that covenant-transaction, he was under infinite obligations, from the reason and nature of things, to love God with all his heart, and obey him in every thing. From the infinite excellence and beauty of the divine nature, and from God's original, entire right to him, as his creature, and absolute authority over him, as his subject, did his infinite obligation so to do necessarily arise. It was fit; it was infinitely fit and right that he should look upon the infinitely glorious God, his Maker and Governor, as being what he was, and as having such a right to him, and authority over him, as he had, and that he should be affected and act accordingly, antecedent to the consideration of any covenant-transaction. And, no doubt, this was actually the case with him before that covenant was made; for he was created in "the image of God;" and so his heart was full of a sense of his glory, and of admiring and adoring thoughts. He felt that he was not his own, but the Lord's; and he loved him, and was entirely devoted to him, in the temper of his mind, conscious of the infinite obligations he was under thereto. And further, it is certain that God was the sole Lord and owner of this lower world, and all things in it; and that Adam had no right to any thing but by a divine grant. And it is certain it was fit that Adam should be put into a state of trial, and that God had authority to do it.

And now, since he was naturally under such infinite obligations to love and obey God, his Maker, God, the supreme Lord and sovereign Governor of all things; since he had no right to any of the trees of the garden, but by the free grant of God; and since it was fit he should be put into a state of trial, and God had authority to do it; since these things were so, it is evident that constitution was holy; "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." God had a right to make such a law, for Adam was his, and all the trees in the garden were his, and he was, by nature, God, supreme Lord and sovereign Governor of the whole world, and it was fitting he should act as such; and it was infinitely fit that Adam should have a sacred regard to his authority in all things,

because he was such; and that his eternal welfare should lie at stake, and be suspended upon his good behavior. And, no doubt, Adam viewed things thus, and was thoroughly sensible that God had a right to prohibit that tree upon pain of death, and that he was under infinite obligations to have a most sacred regard to his will in that matter. Thus that constitution was holy.

And if we consider, in the next place, that, as has been observed, Adam was under infinite obligations to love God, his Maker, with all his heart, and obey him in every thing, resulting from the very reason and nature of things, it will appear that the threatening was just; and no more than what he must have expected had he fallen into any sin whatsoever, antecedent to any constitution at all. Adam, in a state of pure nature, that is, prior to any covenant-transaction, was under infinite obligations to perfect love and perfect obedience; the least defect, therefore, must have been infinitely sinful; and so, by consequence, must have deserved an infinite punishment. And it was meet that God, the Governor of the world, should punish sin according to its real desert; in the nature of things it was meet, antecedent to any express declaration of his design to do so; and Adam knew all this. He knew what obligations he was under to God, to love him with all his heart, and obey him in every thing; and, by consequence, he was conscious to himself that the least defect would be an infinite evil, and so would deserve an infinite punishment; and he knew that it was the nature of God to render to every one according to his deserts; he was certain, therefore, from the reason and nature of things, antecedent to that threatening, that the least sin would expose him to an infinite punishment. From this view of the case, it is plain that that threatening was just, and Adam did most perfectly approve of it as such. It was no more than it was reasonable for Adam to expect, and meet for God to inflict, for any transgression of the law of nature. And it was against the law of nature for Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, when once God had said he should not. It was practically denying God's supremacy, casting off his authority, and actually setting up his will against the Lord's. If any sin, therefore, deserved an infinite punishment, surely that did.

Remark. And here, by the way, from this view of the case, we may gain a certain knowledge of what God meant by "Thou shalt surely die;" or, as it is in the original, "In dying thou shalt die;" and may be certain how Adam understood it. He did not mean that Adam should be annihilated; for such

a punishment was not equal to the crime. He might, without injustice, have annihilated Adam, had he remained innocent; for he that gives being, of his mere good pleasure, may, of his mere good pleasure, take it away again; nor could Adam have brought God into debt by a thousand years' perfect obedience; for he owed himself, and all he could do, to God his Maker. (Rom. xi. 35.) God meant to punish Adam according to his deserts; but annihilation would not have been such a punishment; and therefore it is certain that this was not what God meant. Adam knew that sin was an infinite evil, and so deserved an infinite punishment, and that it was meet it should be punished according to its deserts, and that it was the nature of God to do so; but annihilation was not such a punishment, and Adam could not but know it; and therefore Adam could not understand death in this sense. God meant to punish Adam according to his deserts. And what did he deserve? Why, an infinite punishment; that is, to have all good taken away, and all kinds of evil come upon him forever. Well, what good had Adam in possession? Why, he had a natural life, resulting from the union of his soul and body, with all the delights and sweetnesses thereof; and he had a spiritual life, resulting from the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, and consisting of the image of God and sense of his love, with all the delights and sweetnesses thereof; and he was formed for immortality, and so was in a capacity of eternal life and blessedness, in glorifying God and enjoying him. Here, therefore, he was capable of a natural, a spiritual, and an eternal death; to have soul and body rent asunder forever; to be forsaken by the Spirit of God, and given up to the power of sin and Satan forever, and to have God Almighty become his everlasting enemy. All this he deserved; and therefore God meant all this. All this he knew he should deserve; and therefore he could not but understand the threatening to comprehend all this. Besides, that which makes it still more certain, that this was the meaning of that first threatening, is, that God has since very expressly threatened eternal death as the wages of the least sin. (Rom. i. 18. Gal. iii. 10. Matt. xxv. 46 — and the word *death* itself is plainly used to signify eternal death and misery — Rom. vi. 23; viii. 13.) So that either now he means to punish sin more than it deserves, or he intended then to punish sin less than it deserved; or else eternal death was what he always meant, by threatening death as the wages of sin. If he means to punish sin now more than he did then, it is too much now or not enough then; both which are equally contrary to the

reason and nature of things, and equally inconsistent with the impartial justice of the divine nature, which always inclines him to render to every one according to his deserts; nor more nor less; and therefore eternal death was intended in that first threatening. But this by the way.

And lastly, as that constitution was holy and just, so also it was good; because it put Adam, personally considered, under better circumstances than he was before. For, while in a state of pure nature, perfect obedience could not have given him any title to eternal life; but, as was said before, God might have annihilated him at pleasure, after a hundred or a thousand, or ten thousand years, without any injustice to him. (Job xxii. 2. Rom. xi. 35.) But now, under this constitution, he had an assurance of eternal life upon perfect obedience. For inasmuch as God threatened death in case he should sin, it is evidently implied that he should have lived forever in case he had been obedient. So that there was infinite goodness manifested to Adam, personally considered, in this constitution; eternal life being thus promised, of mere unmerited bounty. And besides, after a while, his state of trial would have been at an end, and he confirmed in an immutable state of holiness and happiness; of which confirmation the tree of life seems to have been designed as a sacramental sign. (Gen. iii. 22. Rev. ii. 7; xxxii. 14.) Whereas, had he remained in a state of pure nature, he must have been everlastingly in a state of probation, had it pleased his Maker to have continued him in being. So that, upon the whole, it is plain this constitution, as to Adam, personally considered, was holy, just, and good; and Adam had great reason, with all his heart, to give thanks to God his Maker, for his goodness and condescension, that he would be so kind, and stoop so low, as to enter into such a covenant with a worm of the dust; and, no doubt, he did so with the sincerest gratitude. We proceed, therefore, to consider,—

(2.) That if all his posterity had been put under this same constitution, one by one, from age to age, as they came into being, to act singly for themselves, it had also, as to them, been holy, just, and good. As it was better for Adam than a state of pure nature, so it would have been, for the same reason, better for us. We, had we remained in a state of pure nature, that is, without any constitution at all, should have been, each one of us, under the same infinite obligation to perfect obedience to the law of nature, and equally exposed to the same infinite punishment for the least sin, as he was, and as much without a title to life upon perfect obedience, and as

liable to be everlastingly in a state of probation. And, therefore, such a constitution would have been as great a favor to us, as it was to him; and we equally under obligations to gratitude and thankfulness to God therefor. But,

(3.) It was as well for our interest, in the nature of the thing, in all respects, that Adam should be made a public head and representative, to act not only for himself, but for all his posterity, as if we had been put to act singly for ourselves; and, in some respects, better. For Adam was, in the nature of the thing, in all respects, as likely to stand as any of us should have been, and, in some respects, more likely; for he had as good natural powers; as much of the image of God, and as great a sense of his obligations, as any of us should have had; and had, in all respects, as many motives to watchfulness; and, in some respects, more; in that not only his own everlasting welfare lay at stake, but also the everlasting welfare of all his posterity too. Besides, he had just received the law from God's own mouth, and he was in a state of perfect manhood when his trial began. So that, upon the whole, in the nature of the thing, it was more likely he should stand than that any of us should; and, therefore, it was more for our interest that he should act for us, than we for ourselves. But if we had been put to act singly for ourselves, under such a constitution, it had been much better than to be left in a state of pure nature, and so we should have had great cause of thankfulness to God for his condescension and goodness; but to have Adam appointed to act for us, was, in the nature of the thing, still more to our advantage; on the account of which, we have, therefore, still greater cause of thankfulness to the good Governor of the world. It is infinite wickedness, therefore, to fly in the face of Almighty God, and charge him with unrighteousness, for appointing Adam our head and representative. We ought rather to say, "The constitution was holy, just, and good; yea, very good; but to us belong shame and confusion of face, for that we have sinned."

Obj. But God knew how it would turn out; he knew Adam would fall, and undo himself and all his race.

Ans. When God called Abraham, and chose him and his seed for his peculiar people, to give them distinguishing advantages and privileges, and that professedly under the notion of great kindness and unspeakable goodness; yet at the same time he knew how they would turn out; how they would be a stiff-necked people, and would kill his prophets, his Son, and apostles, and so be cast off from being his people. He knew all this beforehand; yet that altered not the nature of

the thing at all; did not diminish his goodness, nor lessen his grace. And the Jewish nation, at this day, have reason to say, "The Lord's ways have been ways of goodness, and blessed be his name; but to us belong shame and confusion of face, for that we have sinned."

Obj. Yes, but God decreed that Adam should fall.

Ans. He did not decree that Adam should fall, any more than he did that the seed of Abraham should turn out such a stiff-necked, rebellious race. He decreed to permit both to do as they did; but this neither lessens his goodness, nor their sin; for God is not obliged to put his creatures under such circumstances as that they shall never be tempted nor tried; and when they are tried, he is not obliged to keep them from falling; it is enough that they have sufficient power to stand, if they will; which was the case with Adam. Besides, God had wise ends in permitting Adam to fall; for he designed to take occasion therefrom to display all his glorious perfections in the most illustrious manner. So that we may say of it, (and should, if we loved God above ourselves,) as Joseph does of his brethren's selling him: "Ye meant it for evil, but the Lord meant it for good." So here, Satan meant it for evil, but God meant it for good; even to bring much glory to his great name; therefore be still, and adore his holy sovereignty; and, at the same time, acknowledge that the constitution, in its own nature, was holy, just, and good — yea, very good. These things being considered, I proceed to add, —

(4.) That, in such a case, God, as supreme Lord and sovereign Governor of the whole world, had full power and rightful authority to constitute Adam, our common head and public representative, to act in our behalf; for, as the case stood, there could be no reasonable objection against it. Adam was not held up to hard terms. The threatening, in case of disobedience, was strictly just. The constitution, in its own nature, was vastly for the interest of Adam and of all his race. Adam was already constituted the natural head of all mankind; for "God blessed him, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." All his race, had they then existed, would, if they had been wise for themselves, readily have consented to such a constitution, as being well adapted to the general good. So men are wont to do when their estates lie at stake, or their lives; if they think that an attorney is likely to manage the case for them better than they can for themselves, they will choose him, and venture the case with him, rather than with themselves. So that the only question is, whether God had, in so unexceptionable a case, full power

and rightful authority to constitute Adam a public head, to stand as a moral representative for all his race, and act in their behalf, so that they should stand or fall with him. Or, in other words, — for it all comes to the same thing, — whether, in any case whatsoever, God has full power and rightful authority to appoint one to stand and act in the room of another, so as to lay a foundation for the conduct of the one to be so imputed to the other, as that both shall stand and fall together. And so it is as much of a question, whether God had power and authority to constitute the second Adam a public head as the first. If God had not full power and rightful authority to appoint the first Adam to be our public head and moral representative, to stand and act in our behalf, so as to lay a foundation for his conduct to be so imputed to us, as that we should stand and fall with him, then he had not full power and rightful authority to appoint the second Adam to be a public head, and moral representative, to stand and act in the room of a guilty world, so as to lay a foundation for his righteousness to be so imputed to them that believe in him, as that they should be justified and saved through it. For, if God has not power to constitute one to stand and act in the room of another, in any case whatsoever; and if, on this footing, we say he had not power to appoint the first Adam, it is plain that, on the same footing, he had no power to appoint the second. I suppose it will be readily granted, that if God has power, in any case whatsoever, to constitute one to stand and act in the room of another, in the manner aforesaid, then he had in these two instances of Adam and Christ, which are doubtless, on all accounts, in themselves most unexceptionable. But if God in no case whatsoever has power to appoint one thus to stand and act in the room of another, then both these constitutions are effectually undermined, and rendered null and void. We can neither be guilty of Adam's first sin, so as justly to be exposed to condemnation and ruin therefor, nor can the righteousness of Christ be so imputed to us as to entitle us to justification and life. One man's disobedience cannot constitute many to be sinners, nor the obedience of one constitute many to be righteous. We can neither be ruined by the first Adam, nor redeemed by the second. Under the Jewish dispensation, it was ordained, that "Aaron should lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And," says God, "the goat shall bear upon

him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited." We used to think this scape-goat was designed by God to typify Christ. And the Scripture has taught us, in express language, that "the iniquities of us all were laid on him; that he bore our sins; that he was made a curse for us; that by his obedience many are made righteous. (Isai. liii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Gal. iii. 13. Rom. v. 19.) But if God has not authority to constitute one to stand and act in the room of another, this must all be void and of none effect. And thus, while men are disputing against the original constitution with Adam, they, unawares, undermine this second constitution, which is the foundation of all our hopes. Eager to avoid Adam's first sin, whereby comes condemnation, they render of none effect Christ's righteousness, whereby comes justification. And if Christ did not stand and act as a public person; if our sins were not laid upon him; if he did not bear them on the tree; if he was not made a curse for us, and if we are not to be pardoned through his atonement, and justified through his righteousness; then the gospel is all a fable, and the whole scheme of our salvation, therein revealed, is wholly overthrown. What remains, therefore, but deism and infidelity? But inasmuch as we have full evidence to the truth of the Christian revelation, and may be assured that it is from God, we may, therefore, be confirmed in it that Jesus Christ has been, by God, the great Governor of the world, appointed a public person, to stand and act, to obey and suffer in our room, that, through his obedience and sufferings, we might have pardon and eternal life. And, from this fact, we may be assured that God has full power and rightful authority to constitute one to stand and act in the room of another; and, if he has such authority, nothing hinders but that he might constitute Adam to be our public head, as has been said.

Besides, if we consider the nature of the thing itself, it is plain that God had power to constitute Adam our public head; for God, as moral Governor of the world, and sovereign Lord of all things, has power to make any constitution whatsoever, which does, in its own nature, agree to the eternal fitness of things, or, in other words, which is agreeable to his own perfections. But all will grant, that constitution is agreeable to his own perfections, which, in its own nature, is suited to the glory of God and good of the creatures. Now, this constitution with Adam was, in its own nature, suited to the general good of mankind, because the welfare of mankind was, in the nature of the thing, safer and better secured upon such a footing, than if every single child of Adam had been left in

a state of pure nature, without any constitution at all, or than if they had every one been put to act singly for himself; as has been before proved. And it was well suited to the glory of God, because in that constitution, considered in its own nature, God eminently appeared to be what he was. For in it he appeared as the most high God; the supreme Lord and sovereign Governor of the whole world; for in it he acted as sovereign Lord of his creatures, as being, by nature, God, and as having an absolute right to and authority over the works of his hands. And when God acts so, as by his conduct to show what he is, then are his doings suited to his own glory; for nothing is more to his glory, than to appear to be what he is. And inasmuch as the constitution itself was well suited to the general good of mankind, God did, in making of it, act a kind and tender part towards the human race, to the honor and glory of his goodness. And while eternal life was promised to perfect obedience, and eternal death threatened to disobedience, God's infinite love to virtue, and infinite hatred of vice, were manifested, to the glory of his holiness and justice. Since, then, that constitution was thus, in its own nature, suited to our good, and God's glory, there is no doubt but the sovereign Lord and Governor of all things had full power and rightful authority so to appoint; for, in so doing, he would act agreeably to his own perfections and the eternal fitness of things.

But to conclude: we may be abundantly satisfied, not only from the nature of the thing, but also from what God has in fact done, that that constitution was holy, just, and good, and that he had full power and rightful authority to do as he did, because otherwise he would never have done so; he would never have made such a constitution. It is plain and evident, from facts, that Adam was considered and dealt with under the capacity of a public head, and that death, natural, spiritual, and eternal, were included in the threatening; for all his posterity are evidently dealt with just as if that had been the case. They are born spiritually dead, as has been proved in the former discourse. They are evidently liable to natural death, as soon as they are born. And if they die and go into eternity with their native temper, they must necessarily be miserable in being what they are, unlike to God, and incapable of the enjoyment of him, and contrary to him. And God must necessarily look upon them with everlasting abhorrence; for he cannot but abhor creatures whose tempers are contrary to him; so that here is eternal death: and all in consequence of Adam's first sin.

Now, then, if indeed we are, in fact, dealt with just as we should have been, had Adam been our public head, there can surely need no further evidence to prove that this was the case; for the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right; and, therefore, he would not deal with us as being guilty of Adam's first sin, were not Adam our representative. But had Adam been our representative, and his first sin imputed to us, yet then we should have been dealt with no otherwise than now we are; that is, on supposition of the interposition of a mediator, as is now the case; for that we are now born into the world subject to natural death, none can deny, and this by virtue of Adam's first sin; and if we are really spiritually dead too, and so exposed to eternal death, it is just what might have been expected, had Adam stood for us; and so there is no more to be said. And if God be such a being as I suppose he is, and the law such, and the nature of true holiness such, then, as has been shown in the first Discourse, there is no doubt we are, natively, spiritually dead. So that the force of this argument depends upon the truth of those first principles, which I think have been sufficiently proved. Right apprehensions of the moral law will, at once, convince us of our inherent natural corruption, and make us feel that we are fallen creatures.

Remark. Perhaps this is the consideration which most commonly first leads poor sinners to see that they do actually lie under the guilt of Adam's first sin; and that their ruin thence took its rise, namely, their finding, by experience, when the Spirit of God brings home the law, and awakens conscience, that they are, by nature, dead in trespasses and sins; for now no conclusion can be more natural than that they are, by nature, children of wrath. And this will naturally lead them to inquire whence this has come to pass; and they will presently find the Scripture express and plain in it that "by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; and by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation:" and their own experience will give them the most natural comment upon the words, while they feel themselves to be, by nature, dead in sin, and exposed to eternal ruin. But now, "How could I justly have all this come upon me for Adam's first sin?" will naturally be the next thought. And an awakened conscience will, perhaps, first of all, reply, "How it is just and right I cannot tell, but I am certain so it is, that I am, by nature, dead in sin, and, by nature, a child of wrath; this I see and feel. And the Scripture says, that, 'by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; and that, for the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to

condemnation.' And God's ways must be righteous, for the Judge of all the earth always does right. And if I do finally perish, I have nothing to say; for I have gone in Adam's steps; I have been voluntary in my rebellion against God all my life, and am at heart an enemy to him still, and that voluntarily so." And this may, in a measure, silence such a poor sinner for the present. But if ever he comes to be reconciled to the divine nature, and then impartially to look into the original constitution, he may then see that it was, in its own nature, holy, just, and good, and worthy of God, the great Governor of the world; and, as such, sweetly acquiesce in it, saying, "God's ways were holy, just, and good, and blessed be his name; but to us, to all the human race, belong shame and confusion of face, for that we have sinned." But until men are awakened, at least to some sense of their natural corruption, they are commonly very blind and deaf to all the Scripture says about this matter. It is hard to make men believe contrary to their own experience; to make them believe that they fell in Adam, when they do not feel that they are, by nature, fallen creatures. Let the Scripture speak ever so plain, yet they cannot believe that it means as it says. It must mean, they think, something else. The best method, therefore, to convince sinners of the doctrine of original, imputed sin, and to silence all their cavils, is to open the true meaning of the moral law, and show them their native depravity. This is the method which God takes in the Bible. He says but little about Adam's first sin, but says much to show us what we really are, as knowing that, if we are but once convinced of our native corruption, a few words are sufficient to show us whence our ruin originally took its rise.

Thus God, the great Governor of the world, in the gospel dispensation, considered mankind as being in a perishing condition; sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone; and one ground and reason of his looking upon mankind to be in such a condition was, our original apostasy from him in our first parents. And since that constitution, whereby Adam was made our common head and public representative, was holy, just, and good, in its own nature; and since God, the supreme Lord of all things, had full power and rightful authority so to ordain and appoint; hence, therefore, he has sufficient reason to look upon mankind, on account of this first apostasy, as he does.

Therefore, at the same time he provided a Savior for Adam, at the same time did he also provide a Savior for his posterity too; they being considered as one with him, and involved in

the same sin, and guilt, and ruin; and so standing in equal need of relief. Hence Christ is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Then was it said, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. To which original grant our Savior seems to have respect, when he says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," etc. Whereas, had Adam acted in the capacity of a private person, and sinned and fallen for himself alone, and his posterity not been involved in the same ruin, he might have had a Savior provided for him. But his posterity would no more have needed one than the angels in heaven, or than Adam before his fall.

Obj. But those words, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," were evidently spoken only to Adam; nor is there a word said about his posterity having any interest or concern in the affair.

Ans. So also were those words, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," spoken only to Adam, without the least intimation that his posterity were any of them included in the sentence. And yet, by virtue of that sentence, all his posterity are subject to death. (Rom. v. 12—14.) Do you account for this, and you will, at the same time, account for that; for the truth is, that, in both cases, Adam was considered not merely as a single private person, but as a public head and representative, standing in the room of all his posterity; and, considered in this capacity, was he threatened with death, in case he sinned; and, considered in this capacity, was natural death denounced upon him after his fall. So that, in both, his posterity were equally included; and therefore St. Paul calls Adam a type of Christ, (Rom. v. 14;) and calls Christ the second Adam, (1 Cor. xv. 45;) because both these, by the authority of the great Governor of the world, were constituted public persons, to act in the behalf of mankind; and all mankind were so included in them, that St. Paul speaks as if there had been but only these two men, Adam and Christ. "The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven."

2. God, the supreme Ruler of the world, does, in the gospel, consider mankind as being in a perishing condition; not only on the account of their original apostasy in Adam, their common head and representative, but also because they are what they are in themselves. First. Destitute of the divine image. Secondly. Contrary to God in the temper of their hearts. Thirdly. Utterly averse to a reconciliation. Fourthly. In a disposition, if unrestrained, to live in all open rebellion

against the Majesty of heaven, before his face. Fifthly. And yet insensible of their just desert, and of their need of sovereign grace; and ready rather to think it a cruel thing, if God should damn them.

(1.) God saw mankind destitute of his moral image; for, being conscious of the holy temper of his own heart; of the holy propensity of his own nature; and being conscious to the temper of their hearts; to the propensity of their nature, at first view he saw what they were. "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one." He saw mankind destitute of a conformity to his holy law. The law requires mankind to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively; and to love one another as their own souls; but he looked down from heaven; he beheld, and, lo, all the human race were entirely devoid of that temper. None were in a disposition to account him infinitely glorious in being what he was; not one had the least relish or taste for the beauty of his moral perfections; every heart was empty of holy love and of holy delight, and devoid of any true spirit or principle of obedience; and all mankind had lost that frame of spirit towards one another which they ought to have. The whole world lay in ruin. He knew his law was holy, just, and good, and that his creature, man, was under infinite obligations to a perfect conformity thereto. He saw what grounds there were for the law, and what reasons for their obedience. He saw his own infinite excellency, and his original, underived, entire right to them; and was conscious to his rightful authority over them. He judged them infinitely to blame for their nonconformity, and worthy of an infinite punishment. Speaking after the manner of men, he did, in the inward temper of his heart, perfectly approve of those words, (Gal. iii. 10,) as being strictly just, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Therefore he looked on mankind in a perishing condition. But,

(2.) He viewed mankind not only destitute of good, but full of evil; not only void of the true love to God, and to one another, but enemies to God, and living in malice and envy among themselves. He looked down from heaven and viewed a guilty world, and saw their contrariety to his nature and to his law. Conscious of his own divine temper, he saw every contrary temper in them. What he esteems, they despise; what he delights in, they loathe. The end which he prose-

cutes, they oppose; and they esteem and delight in that which is contrary to him, and prosecute ends and designs contrary to his. He saw their views, their tempers, their wills, their ends, designs, and ways, were all contrary to him, and diametrically opposite to his law. He considered them as his enemies, and their tempers as perfect enmity and contrariety to the divine nature. (Rom. viii. 7.)

(3.) And, inasmuch as he thus saw them entirely destitute of love to him, and diametrically contrary to the divine nature in the temper of their hearts, he knew they would have no inclination to a reconciliation to God; but would be naturally averse to it. He knew their aversion to a reconciliation would be as strong as their contrariety to the divine nature, from which it took its rise. He saw that if he should attempt to reclaim them, he should only meet with resistance; that if he should spread the news of pardon and peace through a guilty world, and invite them to return and be reconciled, that they would make light of it and despise it; that if he should send messengers after them, to persuade them to return, and beseech them to be reconciled, that they would put many of them to death. He saw just what treatment the prophets, and Christ, and his apostles were like to meet with. He knew not one in all the world would repent and convert, unless brought thereto by his own almighty arm and all-conquering grace. (Matt. xxi. 33—39. Rom. viii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.)

(4.) Yea, so far from a disposition to repent and convert, that, if left wholly to themselves, unrestrained, no wickedness would be too bad for them. All would act as bad as Cain, Manasseh, or Judas; and the whole human race be like so many incarnate devils; they having the seed of all sin in their hearts. (Mark vii. 21, 22.)

(5.) And yet insensible of their sin and guilt, and just desert, and that they lie merely at the sovereign mercy of God, and that he is at liberty to show mercy, or not, as seems good in his sight; yea, so averse to the knowledge of this their true state, as to be disposed to hate the light, and shut their eyes against it, ready to resist all methods of conviction; yea, that some would be even so perverse, as actually to rise in arms against his messengers, who endeavored to show them their ruin and the way of their recovery, and put them to death, as not fit to live; and yet so stupid as to think, that, in all, they did God good service. And that, in general, a great outcry would be raised round a proud and guilty world, against the Lord, for supposing mankind to be in so bad, so very forlorn a state. God knew the pride of man, that he is exceedingly

proud; and saw how great offence would be given to a guilty world, who would by no means endure to be so affronted. (John iii. 19, 20; viii. 33, 47.)

Now, such were the grounds upon which God looked upon the human race in a perishing condition; sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone. And considering that the original constitution with Adam, according to which he and all his posterity were doomed to destruction, in case he fell, was holy, just, and good; and considering that the law of nature, which all mankind are naturally under, and according to which the least sin exposes to eternal damnation, is also holy, just, and good; and considering our apostasy in Adam, and what we are in ourselves; I say, considering all these things, it is most certain and evident that the judgment of God was according to truth, while he esteemed mankind to be thus in a perishing condition.

That mankind are actually of such a nature, has been demonstrated in the former Discourse. That God, whose understanding is infinite, and who sees all things as being what they really are, must therefore now see mankind to be such, is self-evident; and such as he now sees them to be, such he, from the beginning, knew they would be. It is evident, therefore, *a priori*, that God must have considered mankind to be such, when he first entered upon his designs of grace revealed in the gospel. And if we consider the nature of the gospel, and what methods God has taken with a sinful, guilty world, to reclaim and recover them, and how they have behaved under all, it will be still more evident that mankind are verily in such a case. The law, the gospel, and experience, all join to confirm it.

Had not the gospel considered us as being entirely devoid of the divine image, destitute of any spiritual good thing, blind, dead, graceless, why should it so much urge the necessity of our being born again, made new creatures, having our eyes opened, being raised from the dead, being created anew to good works, and having the law written in our hearts, the heart of stone taken away, and a heart of flesh given? Had not the gospel considered us as being enemies to God, why should it invite us to be reconciled? Had not the gospel considered us as being very averse to a reconciliation, why should it pray and beseech us, with so much earnestness and solemnity, to be reconciled, and use so many arguments? Had not the gospel considered our reconciliation as unattainable by the most powerful arguments, of themselves, why should it declare that, after all, neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor

Cephas, are any thing, or can do any thing, unless God himself give the increase? And were we not enemies to God, and rebels, and inveterate haters of the light, and disposed to rise in arms against it, why should Christ tell his ministers, "I send you forth as sheep among wolves; if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, no wonder they call you so; you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; they that kill you will think they do God good service"? That generation thought as well of themselves as the present generation now on earth does, and were ready to speak the same language, and say, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have killed the prophets;" but Christ knew their hearts. And, had not mankind, on these accounts, been considered as in a perishing condition, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone, why was there provided such a Redeemer, and such a Sanctifier? And why was the salvation of sinners every where represented as being so entirely owing to the grace, the mere grace, the free, astonishing, wonderful grace of God, from first to last? Surely, from all this, most certain and evident it is, that God does, in the gospel, upon these grounds, consider mankind as being in a perishing condition. And upon these grounds we must, therefore, come to consider ourselves so too, or we can never be in a disposition humbly and thankfully to accept the grace offered, and return home to God in the way provided. We shall rather be affronted, that the gospel supposes us to be in so bad a condition; or else never so much as take matters into serious consideration, but do as those invited to the marriage of the king's son — "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." I do but just hint at these things now, because they have been so largely insisted upon heretofore. And thus we see upon what grounds it is, that the great Governor of the world does, in the gospel, consider mankind as being in a perishing condition.

SECTION II.

SHOWING WHENCE GOD'S DESIGN OF MERCY TOWARDS A PERISHING WORLD ORIGINALLY TOOK ITS RISE.

I PROCEED now,

To show what were the motives which have excited God to do what he has done, for the recovery of sinners out of this their perishing condition. And,

1. It is not because the original constitution with Adam, our public head and representative, was too severe. It was not because it would have been hard and cruel, or in the least inconsistent with his infinite goodness and tender mercies, to have left all mankind in that state of total ruin they were brought into by the fall. For had not that constitution been, in its own nature, holy, just, and good, and so most perfectly agreeable to his own nature, to his holiness, justice, and goodness, he would never have made it; for he necessarily infinitely abhors, in his public conduct, to act counter to the inward temper of his heart. For the very reason that he loves himself for being what he is, for the same reason he loves to act like himself, and infinitely abhors the contrary. And if that constitution was holy, just, and good, in its own nature, originally, it must remain so still; for Adam's apostasy, together with all the dreadful consequences thereof, could not alter its nature. The constitution is perfectly as excellent as if Adam had never fallen; perfectly as good as if it had been the means of laying a foundation for the everlasting blessedness of all the human race; for it is what it was. It was excellently well calculated for the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind, in its own nature; and therefore God made it, approved of it, was well pleased with it; nor can he ever alter his mind about it; for it is, in itself, just the same it was at first; and if it was holy, just, and good, in its own nature, and if it remains so still; if the holiness, justice, and goodness of his nature prompted him at first to make it, and then to approve of it, and be perfectly well pleased with it, it could not (it is self-evident) possibly have been, in the least, disagreeable to his holiness, justice, or goodness, to have dealt with all mankind, since the fall, according to it. So that, to a demonstration, God's thoughts of mercy towards a guilty, undone world, did not, in any measure, take its rise from any notion that mankind had been hardly dealt with, or that it would be any thing like cruelty and unmercifulness to damn the whole world for Adam's first sin, according to the tenor of the original constitution. Indeed, to suppose such a thing, highly reflects upon that constitution, and upon God for ever making it. It supposes the constitution was never really holy, just, and good in its own nature, and that God did wrong in making it. And the riches and glory of gospel grace are wholly obscured; for God cannot be considered as a sovereign benefactor, showing undeserved mercy to a guilty, hell-deserving world; but rather as repenting for the injury he has done to mankind, and as endeavoring to make amends for it by a better, a juster,

and kinder conduct for the time to come. And if this were the case, all his pretences, his high pretences to great love and goodness, to great kindness and grace, are hypocritical, and a mere mocking of us. He had abused and injured us, and is now but repenting, and making restitution; and ought, therefore, to have said so, and not pretended he did all from mere grace, which is to affront us, and make as if that constitution was holy, just, and good, and we righteously condemned and justly miserable forever. So that, let us view the case in what light we will, it is most evident and certain that the great Governor of the world considered mankind as being righteously condemned, and liable to everlasting destruction, consistent with the infinite goodness of his nature; nor did a thought of pity ever enter into his heart from the contrary supposition. Yea, it seems to have been his very design to maintain the honor of that constitution, while he shows mercy to a guilty world, inasmuch as he has appointed another public person, his own dear Son, to make atonement for our original apostasy, as well as our other sins, that hereby a way for his mercy might be opened. (Rom. v. 18, 19.)

2. Nor did God's designs of mercy towards a guilty, undone world, take their rise from a supposition that the law of nature, which all mankind are naturally under, is too severe, in requiring perfect obedience, and threatening eternal damnation for the very least defect, (Rom. i. 18. Gal. iii. 10,) or from any supposition that it would have been any thing like cruelty or unmercifulness to have dealt with all mankind according to that rule.

To explain myself, I may just observe, that the original constitution with Adam, as public head, (Gen. ii. 17,) was a positive appointment. After he was turned out of the garden, he ceased to sustain the character or capacity of a public person; nor are his posterity accountable for any but his first transgression. But the law of nature results from the nature of things; from God's being what he is in himself, and from our being what we are, and he our Creator, and we his creatures. And it was binding, in order of nature, antecedent to any positive constitution whatsoever; nor is its binding nature capable of any dissolution. We might have obtained life, according to the constitution made with Adam, had he kept covenant with God; and been confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness: so now we may obtain life by Jesus Christ, who has fulfilled the law of nature, and made atonement for all sin. But the law of nature still remains an unalterable rule of righteousness between God and his creature,

man. We owe perfect obedience to God, and the least sin deserves eternal damnation. And God might always have dealt with mankind simply according to this rule. The original constitution with Adam had some degree of grace in it. The constitution in the gospel is altogether grace. God might have held all mankind bound by the law of nature simply, nor ever have appointed any other way to happiness, than a perfect and persevering obedience; and mankind have been, to all eternity, in a peaceable state, liable to sin and fall into ruin. Whatsoever advantages mankind have had over and above this, are, and have been, of mere grace. According to the law of nature, we are under infinite obligations to perfect holiness in the temper of our hearts, and to perfect obedience in the whole course of our lives, and that not only for a day, or a year, or a thousand years, but so long as we continue in being. And so long as we are thus obedient, we shall be happy; but the least defect, at any time whatsoever, will let in everlasting, inevitable ruin upon us. Adam, in innocence, was under the law of nature, as well as under that particular positive constitution in Gen. ii. 17. So that any other sin, as well as eating the forbidden fruit, must have exposed him to ruin. But, then, by that constitution, he had this peculiar advantage, that, if he persevered, his time of trial should shortly be at an end, and himself and all his race confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness — an advantage never to be obtained by any one merely under the law of nature. For, in the nature of things, it is impossible God should ever be laid under any obligations to his creatures, unless by virtue of his own free promise, which does not belong to the law of nature, but is an act of grace, which he may grant or withhold, as seems good in his sight. When Adam broke covenant with God, and when that positive constitution was at an end, yet still Adam remained, under the law of nature, bound to perfect obedience, to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself; yea, under infinite obligations; and every defect was infinitely sinful, and so was worthy of infinite punishment. And as was the case with him, so is the case with all his posterity. Our obligations are infinite, and so our non-performance infinitely faulty, and worthy of an infinite punishment. Though, indeed, as the case now stands, nor Adam nor any of his race can ever obtain life by the law of nature; because we are sinners, and so, by the law of nature, are condemned without hope. "By the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified; for by the law is the knowledge of sin," and, "The law worketh wrath." And thus, as the case now

stands, we are under infinite obligations to perfect obedience, and are liable to an infinite punishment for the least defect; and yet, through the bad temper of our hearts, we are unable to yield any obedience, and are in a disposition to be continually treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

Now, I say, the supreme King of heaven and earth was not moved to entertain designs of mercy towards a sinful, guilty, undone world, from a supposition that the law of nature was too severe, or that it would have been any thing like unmercifulness to have dealt with all mankind according to that rule. For,

All that this law requires is, that since God is infinitely amiable in himself, and has such an entire right to us, and absolute authority over us as his creatures, we therefore ought to love him with all our hearts, and be entirely devoted to him, to do his will and keep his commands, seeking his glory; and that, since our neighbors are such as we, of the same species, and under the same general circumstances, we therefore ought to love our neighbor as ourselves; both which things are, in their own nature, right, and fit, and reasonable; so that the law is holy. And all that this law threatens, in case of any transgression, is, that since our obligations are infinite, and so the least defect infinitely wrong, therefore every such defect should be punished with the everlasting pains of hell; and that in exact proportion to the several aggravations attending each transgression; which is also, in its own nature, right, and fit, and reasonable; so that the law is just. And that perfect holiness which this law requires, — that is, to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves, — is the highest perfection our nature is capable of, and altogether suited to make us happy; so that the law is good. But,

It is not severe, nor any thing like unmercifulness, to deal with mankind according to a rule, which is, in its own nature, holy, just, and good; but rather it must have been agreeable to the holiness, justice, and goodness of the great Governor of the world so to do. And indeed, were not this the case, it would not have been fit this law should have been repealed. Mankind did not need to be redeemed from the curse of an unrighteous law; for such a law ought to be laid aside, and its curses never executed. God would have been bound in justice to have abolished an unrighteous law. There is no need of Christ or gospel grace in the case; and so all the high commendations of the grace of God in providing a Savior, as being rich, free, and wonderful, are groundless, and cast much reproach upon mankind, as being a guilty race,

righteously condemned, when, in truth, it is no such thing. God ought to have owned that the law was wrong, and to have repealed it; and not to have proceeded as if it was very good, and mankind altogether to blame, and worthy of eternal damnation. And mightily would this have pleased an apostate, proud, and guilty world; and at the same time cast infinite reproach upon God and his holy law, and shut out all the grace of the gospel.

God has therefore, in the gospel, not only supposed the law to be holy, just, and good, and mankind righteously condemned, but has taken all possible care to make it evident that he does so, and thereby to secure the honor of his law, discountenance sin, humble the sinner, and exalt and magnify his grace. Even the whole scheme of the gospel is wisely calculated to attain these ends, as we shall see hereafter. So far was God from being moved to pity mankind, from a supposition that they had, in this respect, been too severely dealt with, and so objects of pity in that sense, that, on the contrary, he most perfectly approved of the law, as holy, just, and good; and was altogether in it, that mankind deserved to be proceeded with according to it. Yea, so highly did he approve of his holy law, and so odious and ill deserving did mankind appear in his eyes for breaking it, that their sin cried aloud for vengeance in his ears; yea, cried so loud for vengeance, that he judged it necessary that his own Son should appear in their stead, and die in their room, to the end that he might be just; might act consistently with the holiness and justice of his nature, while he showed mercy to them. (Rom. iii. 9, 26.) In such a light he viewed things; in such a light must we therefore view them too, or we can never truly understand our need of Christ and gospel grace, or cordially acquiesce in the gospel way of salvation; but rather shall be disposed to quarrel with the strictness of the law, and think ourselves abused, and imagine that God deals hardly with us.

3. Nor was the supreme Being moved to entertain designs of mercy towards mankind from a supposition that their inability to yield perfect obedience made them the less to blame, and so the more proper objects of pity on that account. For mankind are not the less to blame for their inability; but the more unable they are, the greater is their blame; and so the more proper objects are they of the divine wrath and vengeance.

God is a most excellent and amiable being. He infinitely deserves our highest love and esteem, and supreme delight. It is perfectly fit we should be of a disposition to say, "Whom

have we in heaven but thee? and there is nothing on earth we desire besides thee." Now, not to love this God with all our hearts, must be infinitely wrong; and not to love him at all, must be worse still; but to be habitually contrary to him in the temper of our hearts; yea, so averse to him as that we cannot love him, must be, in the very highest degree, vile and sinful. And now, to say we cannot, by way of extenuation, as though we were the less to blame for that, is intolerably God-provoking; since our *cannot* arises only from the bad temper of our hearts, and because we are not what we should be; and not at all from any unloveliness in the divine nature, or from our want of external advantages for the knowledge of God.

Put the case to thyself, O man. Were you as wise as Solomon, as holy as David, as humble as Paul, and of as loving and kind a temper as John; and had you a family of children; and were all the rules and orders of your house like yourself, and calculated to make all your children just such as you are; and did you perceive that your children neither liked you, nor your ways, nor the orders of your house; they show you much disrespect in their carriage, disregard your authority, complain your rules are too strict, and daily break over all orders: at length you call them to an account; are about to convince, humble, and reform them: they plead they are not to blame, at least not so much to blame, because they cannot love you, they cannot like your ways, they cannot but abhor such rules and orders; those very properties, on account of which you are indeed the most excellent man in the world, these are the very things for which they dislike you, while, in the mean time, they can most heartily love their companions in vice and debauchery. And now the question is, whether their inability to love you renders them any the less to blame; or, whether it be not very provoking in them, to plead in excuse for themselves, that they cannot love you; when their *cannot* arises from their voluntary contrariety to all good, and love to debauchery; and not at all from any unloveliness of your person or ways; or for want of advantages to be acquainted with you, and with the beauty of your temper and conduct. The application is easy. Was it any excuse for the ill will of the malicious Pharisees towards Christ, that they could not love him; that they could not but hate him? Did ever any man look upon a malicious, spiteful neighbor, and think him any the less to blame for his abundant ill carriage; for his being so exceedingly ill natured that it was not in his heart to do otherwise? I appeal to the common sense of all mankind.

If such an inability can excuse mankind, then the devils, upon the same footing, may be excused too. And the more any of God's subjects hate him, the less will they be to blame; for the more any do really hate God, the less able will they be to love him; the more averse to his law, the less able to keep it. And, therefore, since our inability arises from such a root, the more unable we are to love God with all our hearts, and yield a perfect obedience to all his laws, the more vile, guilty, hell-deserving we are, and the more unworthy of pity. So that our moral inability and impotency, or rather obstinacy, was, in the nature of things, so far from extenuating our guilt, and moving the divine pity, that it was the strongest evidence of our exceeding vileness, and, as it were, a mighty bar and great discouragement in the way of God's ever entertaining any designs of mercy towards us. It was like the great mountains; so that nothing but infinite goodness could have ever surmounted it. And in this light must we view ourselves and our inability, and become self-condemned before God, or we shall never like it that God looks upon us as he does, nor ever be able to look upon his grace in the gospel in the same light with him, nor can we ever heartily approve of and fall in with that way of salvation.

When we are under sufficient outward advantages to come to know what kind of being God is, and yet, after all, see no beauty in him, nor esteem him, it must be either because we are intolerably bad in our temper, or else because he is not truly and indeed a lovely and amiable being. When we say we cannot love him, under a fond notion that we are hereby excused and are not to blame, we implicitly say, that we are well enough disposed, and are of a good temper, but God is such a hateful being that we cannot love him; there is nothing in him to be loved. So that to say we cannot, under a notion of extenuating our guilt, casts the highest reflection, upon God imaginable, and, indeed, is big with the blackest blasphemy. We had as good say, "It is not owing to us that we do not love God, but to him. We would readily love him, if there was any thing in him for us to love; but there is not, and so we cannot; and therefore are not to blame."

To suppose, therefore, that God, in the gospel, considers us as being the less to blame for this our inability, and from thence is moved to pity us, is the very same thing in effect as to suppose that God owns himself a hateful, unlovely being, and thinks it a great hardship that his poor creatures should be forced to love him, or be damned; and therefore repents

that ever he was so severe, or ever made such a law, and is sorry for them, and will do better by them for time to come. But how horrid a thought is this! It casts the highest reflection upon God, and upon his holy law, and quite destroys all the grace of the gospel. No, no! God knew well enough how the case stood. He was conscious to his own infinite excellency, and to the infinite reasonableness of his law. He knew the hellish temper of an apostate, rebellious race; and verily he was God, and not man, or he would have doomed the whole world to destruction without any pity, or so much as one thought of mercy. "Herein was love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins;" while we were sinners and enemies, (Rom. v. 8, 10,) and most strongly averse to a reconciliation. (2 Cor. v. 20.)

4. Nor did his designs of mercy take their rise from any expectation that a rebellious, guilty, perishing world would be so good as, of their accord, ever heartily to thank him for it. No, he knew well enough how it would be; that many would make light of it, and go their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and that others would be affronted, and some so very angry that they would take his messengers, and stone one, and beat another, and kill another, and finally would crucify his Son. And he expected that mankind in general would be disposed to hate his law, and pervert his gospel, and resist his Spirit; and never one, in all the world, repent and convert, and come and humble himself before him, and bless his holy name, unless brought thereto by his own all-conquering grace. (Matt. xxi. 33—39, and xxii. 1—7. Luke xiv. 16—23. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.)

So that, from the whole, it is very plain God was not moved to entertain thoughts of mercy towards mankind, neither under a notion that they had been, in any respect, hardly dealt with; nor under a notion that their impotency rendered them in any measure excusable; nor under a notion that there was any good in them, or to be expected from them; but, on the contrary, he looked upon the original constitution with Adam to be holy, just, and good; and that, upon that footing, all mankind deserved all ruin; and he looked upon the law of nature also holy, just, and good; and that, upon that footing, a wicked world deserved his everlasting wrath; and he looked upon them altogether criminal for their impotency; in a word, he looked upon them voluntary in their rebellion, and obstinate in their enmity, and infinitely unworthy of the least pity; yea, so unworthy of pity, that, to secure his own honor, and to

save himself from just reproach, while he pitied them, and showed them mercy, he thought it needful that his own Son should become a Mediator, and bear their sin and suffer for their guilt, and so open a way for the honorable exercise of his mercy.

To conclude, therefore: —

5. It is evident that his designs of mercy took their rise merely, absolutely, and entirely from himself; from his own infinite benevolence; from his self-moving goodness and sovereign grace — "God so loved the world."

As for us, we lay in the open field of perdition, polluted, perishing in our blood and guilt; and it was perfectly right that the righteous sentence of the law should be executed upon us: and God had been forever glorious in the everlasting ruin of a rebellious world. There was nothing in our circumstances, all things considered, of the nature of a motive to pity; we were too bad to deserve any pity or relief; yea, so bad, that the great Governor of the world could not, without counteracting all good rules of government, show any mercy but by the interposition of his own Son, to stand and die in our room and stead. So that, instead of any motive to pity, there was every thing to the contrary. Our infinite ill desert lay as an infinite bar in the way. Here, now, was an opportunity for infinite goodness and self-moving mercy to exert itself in the most illustrious manner, in designing mercy; in providing a Mediator, and in opening a door for the exercise of much grace to mankind in general, and of special saving mercy in ten thousand thousand instances. There was nothing, *ab extra*, from without God himself, to move and put him on to such a wonderful and glorious enterprise. The motion was wholly from himself; from his self-moving goodness; from his good pleasure, according to the counsel of his own will. (Eph. i. 3—12.) No wonder, therefore, the gospel every where celebrates the love and goodness, mercy and grace of God, as being rich and free, unparalleled, unspeakable, inconceivable, infinitely great and glorious, as discovered in this most wonderful of all God's works. And to suppose that God was under any obligations to show these favors, would be to undermine and overthrow the whole gospel, and turn a deed of the freest and greatest grace into a work of mere justice. Thus we see whence God's thoughts of mercy, towards a sinful, guilty world, had their rise.

He had in view a great variety of glorious designs, all infinitely wise; all suited to display the glorious perfections of his nature, and bring everlasting honors to his great name. He

designed to destroy the works of the devil. (Gen. iii. 15. 1 John iii. 8.) Satan had induced mankind to their rebellion; and had, perhaps, in his conceit too, made himself strong against the Almighty. He first rebelled himself, and now he had brought others to join with him, and in this world he intended to rule and reign; and, by the whole, bring much reproach upon the rightful Lord of heaven and earth. God wrought, therefore, for his great name's sake, that it might not be polluted; and entered upon methods to defeat his designs, and bring his kingdom to nought, and crush the rebellion, and put him to open shame; and at length bind him up in his chains, that he should deceive the nations of the earth no more; and give all nations, languages, and tongues, to Jesus Christ, and bring the whole world into subjection to him. (Rev. xx. 1—4.) He designed to display his glorious grace, in bringing millions of this seduced, apostate race from the jaws of eternal destruction to eternal glory. (Rom. ix. 23. Eph. ii. 7.) He designed to put all mankind in a new state of probation, and to display his glorious goodness, patience, forbearance, and long-suffering, in his dealings with the obstinate and finally impenitent in this world, and his glorious holiness and justice in their everlasting punishment in the world to come, in the same lake of fire and brimstone which was prepared for the devil and his angels, with whom they had joined in their rebellion against the Majesty of heaven. (Acts xiv. 17. Rom. ii. 4; xix. 22. Matt. xxv. 41.) In a word, he designed to take occasion, from the apostasy of mankind, in the innumerable instances in this world, and throughout eternal ages in the world to come, to display all his glorious perfections; and so, by his whole conduct, to exhibit a most perfect and exact image of himself.

Thus we see that his designs of mercy towards a rebellious, guilty, undone world, took their rise, not from any motives in us, but altogether from the motives in himself; from the infinite, boundless goodness of his nature, and his sovereign good pleasure. And in this light must we view the grace of the gospel; and all our encouragements to hope in his mercy, through Jesus Christ, must take their rise, not from any thing in ourselves, but only from that self-moving goodness and free grace which he has manifested through Jesus Christ. (Rom. iii. 19, 20, 24. Eph. ii. 8.)

And thus we see that his end, as to the elect, was to bring them back from their apostasy, their rebellion, and wickedness, and ruin, to God, their rightful Lord and Sovereign, to become his servants, to love him, and live to him, and live

upon him, and be blessed in him forever. And in this light must we view the gospel; and with this its design must we heartily fall in. And being encouraged by the grace of the gospel to hope for acceptance in the sight of God, through Jesus Christ, we must, through Christ, give up ourselves to God, to be his servants forever. (Luke i. 74, 75. 2 Cor. v. 20. Rom. xii. 1. Tit. ii. 11—14.)

From what has been said, it will be very natural to make these following remarks: —

Remark 1. If all God has done in the gospel, for our recovery from ruin, be of mere free grace, then it is self-evident that God was under no obligations to a fallen, sinful, guilty, rebellious world; but, as for us, might have, consistent with all his perfections, left us in ruin, to inherit the fruit of our doings and the punishment of our sin. He was under no obligation to provide a Redeemer, or a Sanctifier; to give the least hint of a pardon, or take any methods to recover us from the power of sin. He was under no obligations to deal any better by us than would, in the whole, be no worse than damnation. By the constitution with Adam, and by the law of nature, this would have been our proper due. Every thing, therefore, whereby our circumstances have been rendered better than the circumstances of the damned, God was under no obligations unto; but all, over and above that, has been of free and sovereign grace. God was at liberty, as to us, not to have done any of these things for us. Yea, there were on our part mighty hinderances to prevent the mercy of God, and to put a bar in the way of the free and honorable exercise of his grace: even such hinderances, that nothing could remove them but the blood of Christ. Hence, —

Remark 2. Mankind were, by their fall, brought into a state of being infinitely worse than not to be. The damned in hell, no doubt, are in such a state, else their punishment would not be infinite; as justice requires it should be. But mankind, by the fall, were brought into a state, for substance,* as bad as that which the damned are in. For the damned undergo nothing in hell, but what, by the constitution with Adam, and the law of nature, all mankind were, and would have been, for substance, exposed unto, if mere grace had not prevented. And, according to what was but now observed, God was under no

* *For substance*, I say, because it must be remembered that the superadded punishment inflicted upon any in hell, for despising the gospel, must be left out of the account. For all this is over and above what, by the constitution with Adam, and the law of nature, mankind were, or ever would have been, exposed unto.

more obligation to grant any relief to mankind, in this their fallen, sinful, guilty, undone condition, than he is now to the damned in hell; that is, under no obligations at all: but the way for mercy to come to them was mightily barred and blocked up by the infinite reasonableness of their being punished, and their infinite unworthiness, in the very nature of things, as the case then stood, of ever being pitied. So that mankind were, by the fall, brought into a state of being — in Scripture called condemnation and wrath (Rom. v. 18; Eph. ii. 3) — for substance, as bad as that which the damned are in; so that, if the damned are in a state of being infinitely worse than not to be, as no doubt they are, then so also were mankind. And mankind being actually brought into such a state by the fall, is what renders the grace of the gospel so inconceivable, so unspeakable in its greatness, and so absolutely free. To deny that mankind, by the fall, were brought into such a state, is the same thing, in effect, as to deny original sin, and undermine the glorious grace of the gospel.

Obj. But how could God, consistent with his perfections, put us into a state of being worse than not to be? Or how can we ever thank God for such a being?

Ans. Our being brought into so bad a state was not owing to God, that is, to any fault in him, but merely to ourselves; to our apostasy from God. It was our apostasy from God that brought all this upon us, in way of righteous judgment. (Rom. v. 18, 19.) Our being in so bad a state is no more owing to God, than theirs is who are now in hell. They deserve to be in hell, according to a law that is holy, just, and good; and we deserve to be in such a state, according to the constitution made with Adam, which was also holy, just, and good: and therefore the one may be consistent with the divine perfections, as well as the other. It cannot be disagreeable to the holiness, justice, and goodness of the divine nature, to deal with mankind according to a constitution in its own nature holy, just, and good.

Now, inasmuch as God did virtually give being to all mankind, when he blessed our first parents, and said, Be fruitful, and multiply; and inasmuch as *being*, under the circumstances that man was then put in by God, was very desirable, we ought, therefore, to thank God for our being, considered in this light, and justify God in all the evil that is come upon us for our apostasy; for the Lord is righteous, and we are a guilty race.

Those in hell are in a state of being infinitely worse than not to be; and, instead of thanking God for their beings, they blaspheme his name: but still there is no just ground for their con-

duct. They have no reason to think hard of God for damning them; they have no reason to blame him; they have no reason to esteem him any the less for it; he does what is fit to be done. His conduct is amiable; and he is worthy of being esteemed for doing as he does; and all holy beings will always esteem him for it. (Rev. xix. 1—5.) Therefore the damned ought to ascribe all their evil to themselves, and justify God, and say, "He gave us being; and it was a mercy; and he deserves thanks; but to us it is owing that we are now in a state infinitely worse than not to be. God is not to blame for that; nor is he the less worthy of thanks for giving us being, and for all past advantages which we ever enjoyed; for the law is holy, just, and good, by and according to which we suffer all these things." So here: mankind, by the fall, were brought into a state of being infinitely worse than not to be; and were they but so far awake as to be sensible of it, they would, no doubt, all over the earth, murmur, and blaspheme the God of heaven. But what then? There would be no just ground for such conduct. We have no reason to think hard of God; to blame him, or to esteem him any the less. What he has done was fit and right; his conduct was beautiful; and he is worthy to be esteemed for it; for that constitution was holy, just, and good, as has been proved. And therefore a fallen world ought to ascribe to themselves all their evil, and to justify God and say, "God gave us being under a constitution holy, just, and good; and it was a mercy. We should have accounted it a great mercy, in case Adam had never fallen; but God was not to blame for this; nor therefore is he the less worthy of thanks. All that we suffer is by and according to a constitution in its own nature holy, just, and good." Thus mankind ought to have said, had God never provided a Savior, but left all the world in ruin; and thus ought they to have justified God's conduct; laid all the blame to themselves, and acknowledged that God deserved praise from all his works; which, as they came out of his hands, were all very good.

Obj. But although we were, by the fall, brought into such a state of wrath and condemnation, yet now we are delivered out of it by Christ; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Ans. Before men believe in Christ, they are as justly exposed to divine vengeance, as if Christ had never died. (John iii. 18, 36.) And there is nothing to keep off vengeance, one moment, but sovereign mercy; which yet they continually affront and provoke. (Rom. ii. 4, 5.) And they are so far from an inclination to turn to God of their own accord, that they are

disposed to resist all the means used to reclaim them. (John iii. 19.) It is true, God is ready, through Christ, to receive returning sinners, and invites all to return through him. Thus God is good and kind to an apostate world, and offers us mercy. God is not to blame that we are in so bad a case: our destruction is of ourselves, and the Lord is righteous; but still it is evident we are in a perishing condition, and shall certainly perish, notwithstanding all that we, of our own mere motion, ever shall do. If sovereign grace does not prevent, there is no hope.

Obj. But if mankind are thus, by nature, children of wrath in a state of being worse than not to be, and, even after all that Christ has done, are in themselves thus utterly undone, how can men have a heart to propagate their kind, or account it a blessing to have a numerous posterity?

Ans. It is manifest by their conduct, by their neglecting their children's souls, and caring only for their bodies, that parents, in general, do not propagate with any concern about the spiritual and eternal well-being of their posterity. It is probable, in general, they are influenced by the same motive that the brutal world are, together with a desire to have children under the notion of a worldly comfort, without scarcely a thought of what will become of their posterity for eternity.

As to godly parents, they have such a spirit of love to God, and resignation to his will, and such an approbation of his dispensations towards mankind, and such a liking to his whole scheme of government, that they are content that God should govern the world as he does; and that he should have subjects to govern; and that themselves and their posterity should be under him, and at his disposal. Nor are they without hopes of mercy for their children, from sovereign grace through Christ, while they do, through him, devote, and give them up to God, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And thus they quiet themselves as to their souls. And now, considering children merely as to this life, it is certain that it is a great comfort and blessing to parents to have a promising offspring.

As to carnal men, since they are enemies to God and his holy law, it is no wonder they are at enmity against his whole scheme of conduct as Governor of the world. Did they understand how God governs the world, and firmly believe it, I doubt not it would make all their native enmity ferment to perfection. They would wish themselves to be from under God's government, and hate that he should ever have any thing of theirs to govern. As soon as ever they enter into the eternal world, and

see how things really are, this will, no doubt, actually be their case. In a word, if men heartily like the original constitution with Adam, as being, in its own nature, holy, just, and good, this objection will, upon mature consideration, be no difficulty with them; and if they do not, it is not any thing that can be said, will satisfy them. But wicked men's not liking the constitution, does not prove it to be bad.

Obj. It cannot be thought a blessing to have children, if the most of them are likely finally to perish.

Ans. The most of Abraham's posterity, no doubt, for above these three thousand years, have been wicked, and have perished; and God knew beforehand how it would be; and yet he promised such a numerous posterity under the notion of a great blessing. (Gen. xxii.) For, considering children merely as to this life, they may be a great blessing and comfort to parents, and an honor to them; but it is very fitting our children should be God's subjects, and under his government. Nor are they any the less blessings to us, as to this life, because they must be accountable to God in the life to come. They may be a great comfort to us in this life; and we are certain God will do them no wrong in the life to come. All men's murmuring thoughts about this matter arise from their not liking God's way of governing the world.

Remark 3. Then do we begin to make a just estimate of the grace, the free, rich, and glorious grace of God, the great Governor of the world, displayed in the gospel, when we consider mankind, by and according to a constitution and a law, both of them holy, just, and good, actually in such a ruined state. Now we may begin a little more to see the natural import of those words, "God so loved the world;" such a world was it that he loved and pitied; a world in so bad a state; a perishing world, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, altogether helpless and undone. And to have a door opened by the blood of Christ, for us to be raised from the depth of such ruin, is wonderful grace indeed. And in this light does the matter stand in Scripture account; for, according to that, "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation; and, by the disobedience of one, many were made," or constituted "sinners," by virtue of the original constitution with Adam.* And all the world stood guilty before God, by virtue of their want of conformity unto and transgression of the law of nature, or moral law. And hence mankind were considered as being under sin, and under

* *Constituted sinners*, it is in the original; for it was by virtue of that primitive constitution with Adam, that his first sin laid all his posterity under sin, guilt, and ruin.

the curse of the law, and under the wrath of God. (Rom. iii. 9. Gal. iii. 10. John iii. 16. Rom. i. 18.) And under this notion Christ was appointed, "to save his people from their sins," "to deliver them from the wrath to come," and to bring it to pass, that whereas, "by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, many might be made righteous." And hence the gospel so mightily magnifies the grace of God, his love and goodness, as being unparalleled, unspeakable, inconceivable, passing knowledge. "God so loved the world," says Christ: "God commendeth his love," saith Paul: "Herein is love," says John. It has height and length, depth and breadth. It is rich grace, and the exceeding riches of grace. And why? why is it so magnified and extolled? Why, for this, among other reasons, because all this was done while we did not love God; while we were sinners; while we were ungodly; while we were enemies; while we were exposed to wrath, guilty before God, perishing, lost, without strength. Thus God has represented it in his word; his word, which is the image of his mind, and which shows us how he looks upon things, and how they really are. (John iii. 16, 36. Rom. v. 6, 7, 8. 1 John iv. 10. Eph. i. 7, and ii. 7, 8, and iii. 19. Matt. xviii. 11, etc.)

Never, therefore, can a sinner rightly understand the gospel of Christ, or see his need of the provision therein made, or in any measure make a just estimate of the grace of God therein displayed, until he is, in some measure, convinced and made really sensible, by the Spirit of God, that he is actually in such a sinful, guilty, helpless, undone condition. This, therefore, is absolutely necessary, in order to a genuine compliance with the gospel by faith in Jesus Christ. "For the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." And as this is requisite, in order to the first act of faith, so, for the same reason, must we all our days live under a realizing sense of this our sinful, guilty, undone state, by nature, and in ourselves, in order to live by faith. And this will make Christ precious, and the grace of the gospel precious; and effectually awaken us to gratitude and thankfulness; for now every thing in our circumstances, wherein we are better of it than the damned, will be accounted so great a mercy, and the effect of mere grace. And so far as we are from a clear sight and realizing sense of this our sinful, guilty, undone state, so far shall we be insensible of the preciousness of Christ, and the freeness of grace, and the greatness of God's mercy towards us.

Thus, having considered the grounds upon which the most high God did look upon mankind as being in a perishing con-

dition, and the motives whereby he was excited to enter upon any methods for their recovery, we proceed now more particularly to consider the ways and means he has taken and used to bring it about.

SECTION III.

CONCERNING THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF SATISFACTION FOR SIN.

I AM now,

To show what necessity there was for a Mediator, and how the way to life has been opened by him whom God has provided. It is plainly supposed that there was a necessity of a Mediator, and of such a one too as God had actually provided, in order to our salvation; for, otherwise, it had been no love or goodness in God to have given his only-begotten Son. For there can be no love or goodness in his doing that for us which we do not need, and without which we might have been saved as well. Nor is it to be supposed that God would give his Son to die for a guilty world without urgent necessity. If some cheaper and easier way might have been found out, he would surely have spared his beloved Son; he had no inclination to make light of his Son's blood; it was a great thing for a God to become incarnate, and die; and there must, therefore, have been some very urgent considerations, to induce the wise Governor of the world to such an expedient. And here, then, these things may be particularly inquired into:—

1. What necessity was there of satisfaction for sin?
2. What satisfaction has there been made? And wherein does its sufficiency consist?
3. How has the way to life been opened by the means?
4. What methods has the great Governor of the world entered upon for the actual recovery of sinful creatures?

1. We are to consider what necessity there was of satisfaction for sin. It was needful, or else no satisfaction would have been ever required or made. And the necessity was certainly very great and urgent, or the Father would never have been willing to have given his Son, or the Son to have undertaken the work, a work attended with so much labor and suffering. But why was it necessary? This, I think, will appear, if we deliberately and seriously weigh these things:—

(1.) That God, the great Creator, Preserver, and absolute

Lord of the whole world, is not only a being of infinite understanding and almighty power, but also a being infinite and unchangeable in all moral propensities: he loves right and hates wrong to an infinite degree, and unchangeably; or, in Scripture language, he thus loves righteousness and hates iniquity. By his infinite understanding, he sees all things as being what they really are. Whatsoever is fit and right, he beholds as being such; and whatsoever is unfit and wrong, he also beholds as being such. And as are his views, so is the temper of his heart; he infinitely loves that which is fit and right, and infinitely hates that which is unfit and wrong; or, in other words, he has an infinite sense of the moral fitness and unfitness of things, and an answerable frame of heart; that is, infinitely loves the one and infinitely hates the other. From eternity, God has had an all-comprehensive view of things, of every thing that was possible to be, or that actually would be, and of all the relations one being would bear to another, and the relation that all would bear to him; and has seen what conduct would be right and fit in him towards them, and in them towards him and towards one another, and what would be wrong; and, from eternity, it has been his nature infinitely to love that which is right, and hate that which is wrong. And this, his nature, has influenced him in all his conduct, as moral Governor of the world; and he has given so bright a representation of it, that this seems to be the first and most natural idea of God that we can attain. It shines through all the Scriptures, through the law and the gospel, and through his whole conduct, in a thousand instances.

God does not appear to be a being influenced, actuated, and governed by a groundless arbitrary self-will, having no regard to right reason; to the moral fitness and unfitness of things; nor does he appear to be a being governed and actuated by a groundless fondness to his creatures. If a thing is not right, he will not do it, merely because he is above control, is the greatest and strongest, and can bear down all before him. (Gen. xviii. 25.) And if a thing is wrong, he will not connive at it at all, because it was acted by his creatures, although ever so dear to him, and although the most exalted in dignity, honor, and privileges; for instance, the sinning angels; sinning Adam; the Israelites in the wilderness, his peculiar people. Moses, for speaking unadvisedly with his lips, shall not enter into Canaan. David, the man after his own heart, he sinned; and "the sword," says God, "shall not depart from thy house." Yea, "he spared not his own Son," when he stood in the room of sinners. If he had been governed by any thing

like human fondness, surely it would now have appeared. And besides, if that were the case, he could never bear to see the damned lie in the dreadful torments of hell to all eternity. Indeed, by all he has said, and by all he has done, he appears to have an infinite sense of the moral fitness and unfitness of things, and an answerable frame of heart; and to be governed and actuated by this temper, under the direction of infinite wisdom. Hence, as is his nature, so is the name which he has taken to himself, namely, the Holy One of Israel.

It is true, he is a being of infinite goodness and mercy; yet that is not a fond, but a holy propensity, under the government of infinite wisdom; that is, he considers the happiness and good of his creatures, his intelligent creatures, as being what it is. He sees what it is worth, and of how great importance it is, and how much to be desired in itself, and compared with other things: he sees it to be just what it really is, and has an answerable disposition of heart, that is, is desirous of their happiness, and averse to their misery, in an exact proportion to the real nature of the things in themselves. It is true, so great is his benevolence, that there is not any act of kindness or grace so great, but that he can find in his heart to do it; yea, has an infinite inclination to do it, if, all things considered, in his unerring wisdom, he judges it fit and best; and yet, at the same time, it is as true, such is the perfect rectitude and spotless purity of his nature, that there is not any act of justice so tremendous, or any misery so dreadful, but that he can find in his heart, his creatures' happiness notwithstanding, to do that act of justice, and inflict that misery, if need so require; yea, he has an infinite inclination thereto. He regards their happiness and misery as being, what they are, of very great importance in themselves, but of little importance, compared with something else. He had rather the whole system of intelligent creatures should lie in hell to all eternity, than do the very least thing that is in itself unfit and wrong. Yea, if it was put to his own case, if we could possibly suppose such a thing, he would make it appear that he does as he would be done by, when he punishes sinners to all eternity. It was, in a sort, put to his own case once, when his Son, who was as himself, stood in the room of a guilty world; and his heart did not fail him; but he appeared as great an enemy to sin then as ever he did, or will do to all eternity. His treating his Son as he did, in the garden and upon the cross, immediately himself and by his instruments, was as bright an evidence of the temper of his heart, as if he had damned the whole

world. He appeared what he was then, as much as he will at the day of judgment. He is infinite in goodness; yet he is infinitely averse to do any act of kindness, at the expense of justice, from mere fondness to his creatures.

And as his goodness is not fondness, so his justice is not cruelty. He infinitely hates that which is unfit and wrong, and is disposed to testify his hatred in some visible, public manner, by inflicting some proportionable punishment; not because sinners hurt him, and so make him angry and revengeful; for their obedience can do him no good, nor their disobedience any hurt, (Job xxxv. 6, 7;) nor indeed so much because they hurt themselves; for if they did wrong in no other respect, he would never treat them with such severity; but this is the truth of the case; the great Governor of the world has an infinite sense of the moral fitness and unfitness of things, and an answerable frame of heart; and so he infinitely loves that which is fit, and commends and rewards it; and infinitely hates the contrary, and forbids and punishes it; only it must be remembered, that the rewards he grants to the good are of mere bounty as to them, because they can deserve nothing. (Rom. xi. 35.) But the punishments he inflicts on the wicked are pure justice, because they deserve all. (Rom. vi. 23.) For although creatures cannot merit good at the hands of God, from whom they receive all, and to whom they owe all, yet they can merit evil. Nevertheless, rewards and punishments are both alike in this respect, namely, that they are visible public testimonies borne by the Governor of the world to the moral amiableness of virtue on the one hand, and to the moral hatefulness of vice on the other. The one is not the effect of fondness, nor the other of cruelty; but the one results from the holiness and goodness of the divine nature, and the other from his holiness and justice. By the one it appears how he loves virtue, and how exceedingly bountiful he is; and, by the other, how he hates sin, and how much he is disposed to discountenance it, by treating it as being what it is.

Thus, I say, in the first place, we must consider God, the supreme Governor of the world, as a being not only of infinite understanding and almighty power, but also infinite and unchangeable in all moral propensities; as one having a perfect sense of the moral fitness and unfitness of things, and an answerable frame of heart; or, in Scripture language,— Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. The Holy One of Israel. The Lord God, gracious and merciful, but by no means clearing the guilty. Of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. Who renders to every one

according to their doings, etc. — Without a right idea of God, the supreme Governor of the world, and a realizing, living sense of him on our hearts, it is impossible we should rightly understand the methods he has taken to open a way for his mercy to come out after a rebellious, guilty world, or truly see into the grounds of his conduct, the reasons of his doing as he has done. If we know God, and have a taste for moral beauty, we shall be in a disposition to understand the gospel; but otherwise we shall not. (John vii. 17; viii. 47.) For, in the whole of this great affair of our redemption, he has acted altogether like himself.

(2.) God is infinitely excellent, glorious, and amiable in being what he is. His having such a nature or temper, and, at the same time, being of infinite understanding and almighty power, renders him infinitely excellent, glorious, and amiable, far beyond the conceptions of any finite mind. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; the whole earth is full of thy glory."

Hence God loves, esteems, and delights in himself infinitely; not, indeed, from what we call a selfish spirit; for could we suppose there was another just what he is, and himself an inferior, he would love, esteem, and delight in that other, as entirely as he does now in himself. It is his being what he is, that is the ground of his self-love, esteem, and delight.

Hence, again, he loves to act like himself, in all his conduct as moral Governor of the world, as entirely as he loves himself; and it is as much contrary to his nature to counteract the temper of his heart, in his public conduct, as to cease to be what he is. And the plain reason is, that there is the same ground for the one as for the other. He loves himself, because he is most excellent in being what he is; and, for the same reason, he loves to act like himself, because that is most excellent too. He cannot be willing to cease to be of that temper or nature he is of, because it is most excellent; and, for the same reason, he cannot be willing to counteract it, because it is most excellent to act agreeably to it in all things. He is under necessity to love himself; and he is under the same necessity to act like himself. (Gen. xviii. 25.) Hence it is a common thing for God, in great earnestness, to say in his word, I will do so and so, and they shall know that I am the Lord; as if he should say, "A guilty, rebellious race may think and say what they will of me, yet I am what I am, and I will act like myself, and all the world shall know that I am the Lord, that is, that I am what I pretend to be. They shall know it by my conduct, sooner or later."

(3.) God cannot be said to act like himself, unless he appears as great an enemy to sin, in his public government of the world, as he really is at heart. If his conduct as moral Governor of the world, the whole being taken together, should look with a more favorable aspect towards sin, or appear less severe than really he is, then it is self-evident that his conduct would not be like himself, nor would it tend to exhibit a true idea of him to all attentive spectators in all his dominions. If his creatures and subjects, in such a case, should judge of his nature by his conduct, they would necessarily frame wrong notions of the divine Being: and he himself must see and know that he did not act like himself; nor appear, in his conduct, to be what he was in his heart.

But God, the supreme Governor of the world, does, at heart, look upon sin as an infinite evil; and his aversion and enmity to it is infinite. He looks upon it and, (to speak of him after the manner of men) is affected towards it, as being what it really is. But it is infinitely wrong and wicked for us not to love him with all our heart, and obey him in every thing. The least sin is an infinite evil; and such he sees it to be, and as such does he abhor it. The infinite evil of sin does not consist in its lessening God's essential glory or blessedness; for they are both independent on us, and far out of our reach: nor does it consist merely in its tendency to make us miserable: but, in its own nature, it is infinitely wrong, inasmuch as we are under infinite obligations to perfect holiness. Our obligations to love God with all our heart, are in proportion to his amiableness; but that is infinite: not to do so, therefore, is infinitely wrong. But, as has been said, God has an infinite sense of the moral fitness and unfitness of things, and an answerable frame of heart; that is, he infinitely loves that which is right, and infinitely hates that which is wrong. And therefore he infinitely hates the least sin.

If, therefore, he acts like himself, he must in his public government of the world, his whole conduct being taken together, appear, in the most evident manner, to be an infinite enemy to the least sin. He must appear infinitely severe against it; and never do any thing, which, all things considered, seems to look at all with another aspect.

(4.) God, the supreme Governor of the world, cannot be said to appear an infinite enemy to sin, and to appear infinitely severe against it, and that without the least appearance of a favorable aspect towards it in his conduct, unless he does always, throughout all his dominions, not only in word threaten, but in fact punish it, with infinite severity, without the least mitigation or abatement in any one instance whatsoever.

If he should never, in his government of the world, say or do any thing against sin, it would seem as if he was a friend to it, or at least very indifferent about it. If he should say, and not do; threaten to punish, but never inflict the punishment, his creatures and subjects might be tempted to say, "He pretends to be a mighty enemy to sin, and that is all." If he should generally punish sin with infinite severity, but not always, there would at least be some favorable aspect towards sin in his visible conduct; and his subjects might be ready to say, "If he can suffer sin to go half unpunished, why not altogether? And if altogether at one time, why not at another? And if he can abate the threatened punishment in some degree, in some instances, why not altogether, in all instances? If there is no absolute necessity that sin should be punished, why does he ever punish it? But if it be absolutely necessary, why does he ever suffer it to go unpunished?" It would seem, at least by such a conduct, as if sin was not so exceedingly bad a thing but that it might escape punishment sometimes; and as if God was not such an infinite, unchangeable enemy to it, but that he might be disposed to treat it with a little favor. In a word, if God should always punish sins, not one excepted, and that throughout all his dominions, and yet not do it always with infinite severity; but, in some instances, one in a million, we will say, should abate a little, and but a very little; yet so much as he abates, be it more or less, so much does he treat sin in a favorable manner, and so much does he fall short of treating it with due severity, and so far does he appear, in his conduct, from being an infinite, unchangeable enemy to it. So that it is very evident that he cannot, in his conduct, as moral Governor of the world, appear an infinite, unchangeable enemy to sin, without the least appearance to the contrary, in any other possible way or method, than by always punishing it with infinite severity, without the least abatement, in any one instance, in any part of his dominions, in time or eternity. And this would be to act like himself; and in and by such conduct, he would appear to be what he is. But to do otherwise, would be to counteract his own nature, and give a false representation of his heart, by a conduct unlike himself.

Thus it is the nature of God, the great Governor of the world, in all his conduct, to act like himself. But he cannot be said to act like himself, unless he appears as great an enemy to sin, and as severe against it, as he really is, without the least shadow of the contrary; but his conduct cannot appear in this light, unless he does, in fact, punish sin with infinite severity, throughout all his dominions, without the least mitigation, in

any one instance, in time or eternity: therefore it is the nature of God, the Governor of the world, to do so; and therefore he can no sooner, nor any easier, be willing to let any sin go unpunished, than he can to cease to be what he is.* For, as was before proved, it is as impossible for him to act contrary to his own nature, as it is to cease to be what he is: and he can consent to the one as easily as to the other.

Hence, we may learn, this is really a branch of the law of nature, that sin should be punished: it results from the nature of God, the Governor of the world; it was no arbitrary constitution; it did not result from the divine sovereignty. It would, in the nature of things, have been no evil for Adam to have eaten of the tree of knowledge, had not God forbidden it; herein God exercised his sovereign authority, as absolute Lord of all things. But in threatening sin with eternal death, he acted, not as a sovereign, but as a righteous Governor: his nature prompted him to do so; he could not have done otherwise. As it is said in another case, "It is impossible for God to lie;" so it may be said here, It is impossible for God to let sin go unpunished. As he cannot go counter to himself in speaking, so neither in acting. It is as contrary to his nature to let sin go unpunished, as it is to lie; for his justice is as much himself as his truth; and it is, therefore, equally impossible he should act contrary to either.

Hence this branch of the law of nature is not capable of any repeal or abatement. For, since it necessarily results from the nature of God, the Governor of the world, it must necessarily remain in force so long as God continues to be what he is. Besides, if God should repeal it, he must not only counteract his own nature, but also give great occasion to all his subjects to think he was once too severe against sin, and that now he had altered his mind, and was become more favorable towards it: which he can no more be willing to do, than he can be willing actually to cease to be what he is. For, as he loves himself perfectly for being what he is, so he perfectly loves to act like himself, and to appear in his conduct just as he is in his heart. Therefore our Savior expressly asserts, "That heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail."

(5.) But all this notwithstanding, yet God did, of his infinite

* God's mild and kind conduct towards a guilty world, at present, is nothing inconsistent with this; because mankind are now dealt with in and through a Mediator, upon whom our sins have been laid, and who has been made a curse for us. In him our sins have been treated with infinite severity, without the least abatement. But for this, God's conduct, no doubt, would be very inconsistent with his perfections.

goodness and sovereign grace, entertain designs of mercy towards a fallen world: a rebellious, obstinate, stubborn, sinful, guilty, hell-deserving race, under the righteous condemnation of the law; a law, like himself, holy, just, and good. Particularly, he designed to declare himself reconcilable to this sinful, guilty world; to put mankind into a new state of probation: to try and see if they would repent and return unto him, and to use a variety of methods for their recovery. And to make way for this, he designed to reprieve a guilty world, for a certain space of time, from that utter ruin he had threatened, and to grant a sufficiency of the good things of this life for their support while in a state of probation; and he also purposed to grant a general resurrection from the dead, that those who should return to him and be reconciled, might be most completely happy in the world to come. And, because he knew their aversion to a reconciliation, therefore he designed to use a variety of external means to bring them to it. And because he knew that mankind would be universally disposed to hate all such means, not liking to have God in their knowledge, and cast them off, and get from under them, therefore he designed, in his sovereign grace, to select some part of mankind, — the Jews, for instance, — with whom, by his special providence, by the more open or secret workings of his almighty power, such means should be continued. And, in the fulness of time, he purposed also to use equal, yea, greater means, with various nations of the Gentiles. And because he knew that all external means notwithstanding, yet all, with one consent, would refuse to repent, and convert, and be reconciled, therefore he designed, by his providence, and by the more common influences of his spirit, to take some further pains with many, and try them. And because he knew that this would never effectually persuade them, through the great perverseness of mankind, therefore he designed, by the special influences of his Holy Spirit, through his almighty power and all-conquering grace, all their obstinacy notwithstanding, yet to reclaim, and recover, and bring home to himself, a certain number in this world, and here train them up for eternal glory, and finally bring them thereunto; and all of his sovereign goodness, and all to the praise of the glory of his grace. And towards the latter end of that space of time, in which this world was to be reprieved, it was his purpose more eminently to destroy Satan's kingdom on earth, and his influence among mankind, and more generally recover the guilty nations from his thraldom, and set up his own kingdom on earth, to flourish in great glory and prosperity a thousand years. Such were his designs, as is evident by the event

of things, and from the revelation he has made in his word of what is yet to come to pass.

(6.) But as the case then stood, it was not fit that any of these favors should be granted to a guilty world; no, not any thing that had so much as, all things considered, the nature of a mercy, without some sufficient salvo to the divine honor.* Indeed, some kind of reprieve, I presume, might have been granted to a guilty world, so as to have suffered the human race to have propagated, and the whole designed number to have been born; a reprieve, all things considered, not of the nature of a mercy. So the fallen angels seem to be under some kind of a reprieve; for they are reserved in chains to the judgment of the great day, as condemned prisoners. (2 Pet. ii. 4.) And hence a number of them once cried out, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Yet we are not taught, in Scripture, to look upon this as a mercy to them. But the Scriptures teach us to consider our reprieve, our worldly comforts, our means of grace, our space for repentance, the restraints of providence, and the common influences of the spirit, as mercies; yea, as great mercies. (Rom. ii. 4. Isaiah v. 4. Deut. x. 18. Acts xiv. 17. Rev. ii. 21.) All these common favors, therefore, as well as special and saving mercies, were not proper to be granted to such a guilty, hell-deserving world, by a holy, sin-hating, sin-revenging God. This was not to treat mankind as it was fit and meet they should be treated. It was contrary to law that any favor at all should, without a salvo to the divine honor, be granted them; for, by law, they were all doomed to destruction. And it was contrary to the divine nature to do any thing in the case, that, all things considered, would have, in the least measure, a favorable aspect towards sin; or so much as in the least tend to make him seem less severe against it, than if he had damned the whole world for their apostasy and rebellion.

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* *Obj.* But if God could not, consistently with his perfections, show any mercy to a guilty world without a sufficient salvo to his honor, how could he, consistently with his perfections, provide them a mediator? Was not this a great mercy? And what salvo had he for his honor in doing it?

Ans. The very doing of this thing itself was to secure his own honor. This was the very end he had nextly in view. Were it not for this end, a mediator had not been needful; but a guilty world might have been pardoned by an act of absolute sovereign grace. Now, his taking such a glorious method to secure his honor, and the honor of his law, and government, and sacred authority, had no tendency to misrepresent them. He acted in it just like himself. His infinite wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness, are all at once most perfectly displayed in this conduct of the supreme Governor of the world; particularly, his infinite hatred of sin, and disposition to punish it, appeared in the very act of appointing his Son to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. For, in this act, it was manifest that he did choose his own dear Son should himself bear the punishment of sin, rather than let it go unpunished.

If God had set aside his law, which was the image of his heart, and undertaken and shown all these favors to a guilty world, without any salvo to his honor, his visible conduct would have been directly contrary to the inward temper of his heart; and by it he would have counteracted his nature, and misrepresented himself, dishonored his law, rendered his authority weak and contemptible, and opened a wide door for the encouragement of rebellion, throughout all his dominions; and, in effect, gotten to himself the character the devil designed to give of him to our first parents, when he said, "Ye shall not surely die;" that is, "God is not so severe against sin as he pretends to be, and as you think for; nor does he hate it so much, nor will he do as he says in the case." It was therefore infinitely impossible.

(7.) To the end, therefore, that a way might be opened for him to put his designs of mercy in execution, consistently with himself, consistently with the honor of his holiness and justice, law and government, and sacred authority, something must be done by him in a public manner, as it were, in the sight of all worlds, whereby his infinite hatred of sin, and unchangeable resolution to punish it, might be as effectually manifested as if he had damned the whole world. Merely his saying that he infinitely hates sin, and looks upon it worthy of an infinite punishment, would not have manifested the inward temper of his heart in such a meridian brightness as if he had damned the whole world in very deed: but rather, his saying one thing, and doing another directly contrary, would have been going counter to himself; especially, considering him as acting in the capacity of a Governor, to whom, by office, it belongs to put the law in execution, and cause justice to take place. For him first to make a law, threatening eternal death to the least sin, makes him appear infinitely just and holy; but then to have no regard to that law in his conduct, but go right contrary to it, without any salvo to his honor, is quite inconsistent, and directly tends to bring himself, his law, and authority, into the greatest contempt. Something, I say, therefore, must be done, to make his hatred of the sin of mankind, and disposition to punish it, as manifest as if he had damned the whole world; to the end that the honor of his holiness and justice, of his law and government, and sacred authority, might be effectually secured. To act contrary to his own nature, was impossible; to have no regard to the honor of his law and government, was unreasonable; a guilty world had better all have been damned.

Thus, from the perfections of God, and from the nature of the thing, we see the necessity there was that satisfaction

should be made for sin, in order to open an honorable way in which divine mercy might come out after a rebellious, guilty, hell-deserving world.

To conclude this head: The necessity of satisfaction for sin seems also to be held forth in the Scriptures, and to be implied in God's conduct in this affair. In the Old Testament, the necessity of an atonement for sin was taught in types and figures. The man that sinned was to bring his offering before the Lord, and lay his hands upon it, and confess his sin over it; and so, as it were, transfer his sin and guilt to it; then was it to be slain — for death is the wages of sin — and burnt upon the altar, — for the sinner deserves to be consumed in the fire of God's wrath — and the blood thereof was to be sprinkled round about, — for without shedding of blood there is no remission — nor was there any other way of obtaining pardon prescribed but this, which naturally taught the necessity of satisfaction for sin, and led the pious Jews to some general notion of the great atonement which God would provide, and to a cordial reliance thereon for acceptance in the sight of God. (Lev. iv. and xvi. Heb. ix.) But, in the New Testament, the nature and necessity of satisfaction for sin, and the impossibility of finding acceptance with God, unless through the atonement of Christ, is taught in language very plain and express; particularly in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. St. Paul, having proved both Jews and Greeks to be under sin, and all the world to be guilty before God, and that every mouth must be stopped, in the first and second chapters, and in the beginning of the third, does, in the next place, enter upon, and begin to explain the way of salvation, by free grace, through Jesus Christ. "We cannot," says he, "be justified by the deeds of the law, but it must be freely by grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. But if we are not justified by the deeds of the law, by our own obedience, how will God, our Judge, appear to be righteous? If the law condemns us, and yet he justifies us, — that is, if he thus proceeds, contrary to law, to clear and approve when that condemns, — how will he appear to be a just and upright Governor and Judge, who, loving righteousness and hating iniquity, is disposed always to render to every one his due? Why, there is a way contrived, wherein the righteousness of God is manifested in our own justification without the law's being obeyed by us; a way unto which the types of the law and predictions of the prophets did all bear witness; a way in which the righteousness of God is manifested in and by Christ. But how? Why, God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness for the remission of

sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The apostle seems evidently to suppose that God could not have been just, had he not thus declared his righteousness; and that he actually took this method to declare and manifest his righteousness, to the end he might be just; might act agreeably to his nature, the original standard of justice, and to his law, which is the transcript of his nature, and the established rule of righteousness between him our Governor, and us his subjects. He set forth his Son to be a propitiation for the remission of sin, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier, etc.

Besides, the necessity of satisfaction for sin, and that even by the death of Christ, seems to be implied in our Savior's prayer in the garden, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." And again, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done;" as if Christ had said, "If it be possible thy designs of mercy might be put into execution, and poor sinners saved, consistently with thine honor, without my drinking this cup, O that it might be! but if it is not possible it should be so, I consent." Satisfaction for sin being necessary, and there being no easier way in which satisfaction for sin might be made, and a door opened for mercy to come to a guilty world, consistently with the divine honor, seems to have been the very ground of the Father's willing him, and of Christ's consenting, to drink that cup. And, indeed, is it possible to conceive why Christ should be willing to suffer what he did, or why his Father should desire it, were it not an expedient absolutely necessary, and nothing else would do, so that it must be, or not one of the race of Adam be ever saved, consistently with the divine honor? If it was not so absolutely necessary; if there was some cheaper and easier way that would have done, why did the Father will this? or how had Christ a sufficient call to undertake it? or, indeed, what need was there for him to undertake it? or what good would it do? If sin was not, in very deed, so bad a thing that it could not be pardoned without such a satisfaction, why was such a satisfaction insisted upon? why a greater satisfaction than was needful? Could a holy and wise God set so light by the blood of his dear Son, as to desire it to be shed without the most urgent necessity? Or why should the Governor of the world make more ado than was necessary, and then magnify his love in giving his Son, when mankind might have been

saved without it? Did this become the great Governor of the world? or would God have us look upon his conduct in such a light? Surely no. Verily, therefore, such was the case of a rebellious, guilty world, that God looked upon them too bad to be released, consistently with the divine honor, from the threatened destruction, unless such a Mediator should interpose, and such a satisfaction for sin be made; and therefore Christ acquiesced in his will, as being wise, holy, just, and good. And this being supposed, the love of God, in giving his Son, appears even such as it is represented to be; unparalleled, unspeakable, inconceivable; so, also, does the love of Christ in undertaking. And thus, from the perfections of God, and from the Scriptures, and from God's conduct in this affair, it appears that a full satisfaction for sin was necessary, in order to its being pardoned, or any favor shown to a guilty world, consistently with the divine honor.

And if we, in very deed, did stand in such need, such an absolute, perishing need of a Mediator, as this comes to; if God looked upon things in such a light, then must we see this our need of a Mediator, and look upon things in this light too, and have a sense of this great truth upon our hearts; for, otherwise, we neither truly understand what a state we are in, nor what need we have of a Mediator. And if we do not truly understand what a state we are in, nor our need of the Mediator God has provided, how can we be in a disposition to receive him as he is offered in the gospel, and truly and understandingly to rely upon him, his death and sufferings, his worth and merits, his mediation and intercession, as the gospel invites us to do?

To see our need of Christ to be our atonement; to see our need of his propitiatory sacrifice to open the way for the Governor of the world to be reconciled to us consistently with his honor, is a very different thing from what many imagine. Some fancy they want Christ to purchase an abatement of the law, and satisfy for their imperfections; and then they hope to procure the divine favor by their own goodness. Some trust in Christ and the free grace of God through him, as they think, and yet, at the same time, look upon God as obliged, in justice, to save them, if they do as well as they can. Some, who lay not so high a claim to the divine favor, yet, by their tears and prayers, hope to move the compassions of God, and, by their fair promises, to engage his favor, and would secretly think it hard, if, after all, God should cast them off; and yet they pretend to see their need of Christ, and to trust in him. But these are all evidently so far from seeing

their need of Christ, that, in the temper and exercises of their hearts, they implicitly and practically deny any need of him at all; to their own sense, they are good enough to be accepted in the sight of God, upon their own account. Others, who have had great awakenings and convictions, and see much of their own badness, and do, in a sort, renounce their own righteousness; they look to be saved by free grace; but, in all the exercises of their hearts, see no need of a Mediator, and have nothing to do with him; they see no reason why they may not be pitied and saved by free grace, without any respect to the atonement of Christ. They do not understand that they are so bad that it would be a reproach to the Governor of the world to show them mercy, otherwise than through a Mediator. Others, again, who talk much of Christ, and of faith, and of living by faith, and cry down works, and think themselves most evangelical, yet, after all, only believe that Christ died for them in particular, and that they shall be saved: this is their faith, and this their trusting in Christ; whereby it is evident, they never truly saw their need of Christ, nor have they any respect to him under the proper character of a Mediator. But then do persons see their need of Christ, when, from a sense of what they are, and of what God is, they are convinced that they are too bad to be pardoned and accepted; so bad that any thing short of damnation is too good for them; so that it would be inconsistent with the divine perfections, and to the reproach of the great Governor of the world, to show them any favor without some sufficient salvo to his honor. Now they see their need of Christ, and are prepared to exercise "faith in his blood," to use the apostle's phrase, and not till now; for men cannot be said to see their need of Christ and his atonement, unless they see that in their case which renders his atonement needful; but its being inconsistent with the divine perfections, and to the dishonor of God, to pardon sin without satisfaction, was that which made an atonement needful. Therefore sinners must see their case to be such as that it would be inconsistent with the divine perfections, and to the dishonor of God, to grant them pardon without satisfaction for their sins, in order to see their need of Christ and of his atonement. When they see their case to be such, then they begin to see things as they are; to view them in the same light that God does; to perceive upon what grounds, and for what reasons, a Mediator was necessary, and why and upon what accounts they want one; and hereby a foundation is laid for them, understandingly, to have a fiducial recourse to that Mediator which

God has provided, that, through him, consistently with the divine perfections, they may be received to favor; and so, from Christ the Mediator, and from the free grace of God through him, do they take all their encouragement to come to God, in hopes of pardon, and acceptance, and eternal life. And thus they look "to be justified by free grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ," which is what the gospel intends and proposes. And from an increasing sense of their unworthiness and ill deserts, they, through the course of their lives, more and more grow up into a disposition to live the life they live in the flesh, by faith in the Son of God, always having respect to him as their great High Priest, in all their approaches to the mercy-seat, having access to God by him, who has styled himself the door of the sheep, and the way to the Father, which is the very thing the gospel proposes, and invites and encourages us unto. "By his own blood he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "Into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us; and having a high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." "For him hath God set forth to be a propitiation for sin, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just," etc.

And a clear, realizing sense of these things on our hearts will lay a foundation for us to see how the gospel way of salvation is calculated to bring much glory to God, and abase sinners in the very dust, which is that wherein the glory of the gospel very much consists. (Rom. iii. 27. Eph. i. 3—12.) And we shall learn to rejoice to see God alone exalted, and freely to take our proper place, and lie down in the dust, abased before the Lord forever. And, indeed, it is perfectly fit, in this case, that the rebel wretch should come down, and be so far from finding fault with the great Governor of the world, and with his holy, just, and good law, that he should rejoice that God has taken such an effectual method to secure his own honor and the honor of his law. We ought to be glad with all our hearts that the supreme Governor of the world did put on state, and stand for his honor, and the honor of his law, without the least abatement; and did insist upon it that sin should be punished, the sinner humbled, and grace glorified: these were things of the greatest importance; and we ought to choose to be saved in such a way, to have God honored and ourselves humbled. And it is evident this

must be the temper of every one that comes into a genuine compliance with the gospel. Thus much concerning the necessity of satisfaction for sin. But here, now, some may be ready to inquire,

Was it not as necessary that the precepts of the law should be obeyed, as that the penalty should be suffered, to make way for the sinner not only to be pardoned, but also to be received to a state of favor, and entitled to eternal life? To which I answer,

1. It is true, we need not only a pardon from the hands of God, the supreme Governor of the world, in whose sight and against whom we have sinned; we need, I say, not only to be pardoned, delivered from condemnation, freed from the curse of the law, saved from hell; but we want something further. We want to be renewed to God's image, taken into his family, put among his children, and made partakers of his everlasting favor and love. We need not only to be delivered from all those evils which are come upon us, and which we are exposed unto, through our apostasy from God, but we want to be restored to the enjoyment of all that good which we should have had, had we kept the covenant of our God.

2. It is true, also, that mankind, according to the tenor of the first covenant, were not to have been confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness; were not to have had eternal life, merely upon the condition of being innocent, (for such was Adam by creation,) but perfect obedience to every precept of the divine law was required. (Rom. x. 5. Gal. iii. 10.) The performance of such an obedience was that righteousness which was, by covenant, to entitle him to life.

3. Since the fall, all mankind are destitute of that righteousness; nor can they attain unto it. (Rom. iii. 9—20.)

4. But our natural obligations to love God with all our hearts, and obey him in every thing, still remain; for they are, in their own nature, unalterable. They will be forever the same so long as God remains what he is, and we are his creatures. There was the same reason, therefore, after the fall, why we should love and obey God, as ever there was. There was the same reason, therefore, that the condition of the first covenant should be fulfilled as ever there was. It was reasonable, originally, or God would never have insisted upon it; and therefore it is reasonable now, since our apostasy; and God has the same grounds to insist upon it forever; but we cannot perform it ourselves; it was necessary, therefore, that it should be performed by Christ, our surety. But perhaps some may still say,

When Christ had fully satisfied for all our sins, and so opened a way for believers to be considered as entirely free from any guilt, why might not the Governor of the world now, of his sovereign goodness and bounty, have bestowed eternal life, without any more to do? What need was there for Christ to fulfil all righteousness in our room? To which I answer,

When Adam was newly created, he was innocent; free from any guilt; and why might not the supreme Governor of the world, now, without any more to do, have bestowed upon him eternal life and blessedness, of his mere sovereign goodness? What need was there that his everlasting welfare should be entirely suspended upon the uncertain condition of his good behavior? Had not God just seen how it turned out with the angels that sinned? Did he not know that Adam was liable to sin and undo himself too? And why would he run any venture a second time; especially since the happiness, not only of Adam, but of all his race, a whole world of beings, now lay at stake? If he thinks that if but one man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, his loss would be infinitely great, what must the everlasting welfare of a whole race be worth in his account? And would infinite wisdom and infinite goodness venture and hazard all this needlessly? Yea, would such a Being have done so, had there not been reasons of infinite weight to move him to it; something of greater importance than the eternal welfare of all mankind? No doubt there was something, and something of very great importance, that influenced the infinitely wise and good Governor of the world to such a conduct; something so very great, as to render his conduct, in that affair, perfectly holy and wise; perfectly beautiful, excellent, and glorious. It does not look like a mere arbitrary constitution. It was doubtless ordered so, because God saw it was perfectly fit, and right, and best. But why was it fit, and right, and best? Whatever the reason was, doubtless for the same reason it was fit, and right, and best, that the second Adam should perform the same condition; fulfil all righteousness, to the end that, by his obedience, we might be made righteous, and so be entitled to life in this way.

It is certain that eternal life and blessedness were not to have been given absolutely, that is, without any condition at all, under the first covenant. Eternal life was not to have been granted merely under the notion of a gift from a sovereign benefactor; but also under the notion of a reward, from the hands of the moral Governor of the world. Perfect obedience was the condition. "Do and live." (Rom. x. 5.) "Disobey and die." (Gal. iii. 10.) This was established by the law of the God of heaven.

Now, the supreme Governor of the world did this for some end, or for no end. Not for no end; for that would reflect upon his wisdom. Was it for his own good, or his creatures' good? Not for his own good; for he is self-sufficient and independent; not for his creatures' good; for it had been better for them, their interest simply considered, to have had eternal life and blessedness given absolutely and unconditionally; for then they would have been at no uncertainties; not liable to fall into sin or misery, but secure and safe forever. It remains, therefore, that, as moral Governor of the world, he had an eye to the moral fitness of things, and so ordained, because, in itself, in its own nature, it was fit and right.

But why was it fit and right? that is, what grounds and reasons were there, in the nature of the case, why the great Governor of the world should suspend the everlasting welfare of his creature, man, upon condition of his being in most perfect subjection to himself? that is, why should he so much stand upon his own honor, as to insist upon this homage, at the hazard of his creatures' everlasting welfare? that is, why did he look upon his own honor as a matter of so great importance? I answer, that, from the rectitude of the divine nature, he is perfectly impartial in all his conduct. It was not, therefore, from any thing like pride, or a selfish spirit, that he stood thus upon his honor; the homage of a worm of the dust could do him no good; nor for want of goodness, that he set so light by his creatures' happiness; but it was fit he should do as he did; the rectitude of his nature, as it were, obliged him to it. For it becomes the Governor of the world, and it belongs to his office as such, to see to it, that every one has his proper due; and therefore it concerns him, first and above all things, to assert and maintain the rights of the Godhead; and this honor was due to God.

He was, by nature, God, and Adam was, by nature, man; he was the Creator, and Adam was his creature; he was moral Governor of the world, and Adam was his subject; he was, by right, Lawgiver, and Adam was a free agent, capable of, and bound unto, perfect obedience; he was Judge, to whom it belonged to distribute rewards and punishments, and Adam was an accountable creature. Now he only considered himself as being what he was, and his creature, man, as being what he was; and he was affected and acted accordingly. He considered what honor was due to him from man; what obligations man was under to give him his due; that he was capable of doing it voluntarily; that it was fit he should; that it became the Governor of the world to insist upon it; that if he

did not do it with all his heart, he could not be considered as a subject fit for the divine favor, but fit only for divine wrath. He thus viewed things as they were, and acted accordingly. What he did, therefore, was perfectly right and fit. To have had no regard to his honor, but only to have consulted his creatures' welfare, would have been a conduct like theirs in Rom. i. 21, 25. "They glorified him not as God. They worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." *

Now, since the second Adam becomes surety, and stands responsible to the Governor of the world, it was fit he should not only suffer the penalty of the broken law, but obey its precepts too, in order to open a door for us not only to be pardoned, but also received to favor, and entitled to eternal life. There was the same reason the second Adam should do it, as that the first should. The honor of God did as much require it. It was as needful in order to our being considered as subjects fit for the divine favor and eternal life. It became the Governor of the world as much to stand for his honor with one as with the other; and he had as good reason to suspend the everlasting welfare of mankind upon this condition now, as ever; and to have shown no concern for the divine honor, although God had been openly affronted and despised by man's apostasy, but only to have regarded and consulted the welfare of the rebel under righteous condemnation, had been a conduct evidently unbecoming the great Governor of the world.

But again, we may view the case in another point of light. According to the first covenant, eternal life and blessedness were not to have been granted merely under the notion of a gift from a sovereign Benefactor; but also under the notion of a reward from God, as moral Governor of the world; and perfect obedience was the condition — do and live. And while eternal life and blessedness were thus promised, by way of

* How God's putting Adam into a state of trial was consistent with his aiming merely at his happiness as his last end, I cannot understand. Sure I am, it must have been better, unspeakably better, for Adam, his interest only considered, to have been immediately confirmed in a state of perfect holiness and happiness, without running such an awful venture of eternal ruin and destruction. Nor is there any man on earth that would choose, merely out of regard to his own welfare, to be put into a state of trial, rather than into a state of confirmed holiness and happiness, such as the saints in heaven are now in; and, therefore, I cannot but think that God had a greater regard to something else, than to Adam's happiness. In this instance, it seems plain, from fact, that God does not make his creatures' happiness his last end. It is in vain to plead, "that Adam could not be a moral agent, unless he was a free agent; nor a free agent without being liable to sin;" for the saints in heaven are moral agents, and free agents too, and yet are not liable to sin. And if God's putting his creatures into a state of trial is not consistent with his aiming merely at their happiness as his last end, then the whole tenor of God's moral government is not consistent therewith; for, from first to last, it has been his way to put his creatures into a state of trial; even all his creatures who are capable of moral government.

reward to virtue, God's infinite love thereto was hereby testified, and the temper of his heart acted out and displayed. But God infinitely loves to act like himself. On this consideration, therefore, it was necessary that the second Adam should fulfil all righteousness, in the room of a guilty, unholy world, to the end that the Governor of the world might bestow grace, and glory, and all good things upon sinners, as a reward to Christ's virtue, and so hereby testify his infinite love to virtue — and so still act like himself. It was God's sovereign pleasure to exercise his infinite goodness towards a ruined race, and his holy nature prompted him to choose this way; for he always takes infinite delight in showing regard and respect to virtue, in his moral government of the world. He translated Enoch and Elijah; saved Noah from the general deluge; delivered Lot out of Sodom; promised Abraham a posterity numerous as the stars of heaven, and Phinehas an everlasting priesthood; and a thousand things more has he done; and all to bear a public testimony of his love to virtue: this is the thing which the King delights to honor. The very ground of his love to himself is the virtue or holiness of his nature. In this, his divine beauty and glory primarily consists. (Isaiah vi. 3.) He loves, therefore, to put honor upon the image of himself; and, in doing so, he still reflects honor upon himself, the original fountain of moral excellence; and, therefore, according to the first covenant, and according to the second, it was equally fit that eternal life and blessedness should be given as a reward to virtue, in testimony of his regard thereto.

Thus, from the perfections of God, and the reason and nature of things, the necessity of Christ's obeying the preceptive part of the law, as well as suffering the penalty, in order to our being not only pardoned, but received to the everlasting favor of God, and entitled to eternal life, seems evident.

But, from Scripture, the point may more easily be confirmed. For therein we are taught that he was appointed, by the Governor of the world, not only to "make reconciliation for iniquity," but also to "bring in everlasting righteousness;" and are assured that he is become "the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe;" and that "by his obedience many are made righteous." But this work would not have been put upon him, had it been needless; that is, if God's honor and our salvation could both have been secured without it; for then it had been in vain; which to suppose, reflects much upon the divine wisdom, and quite undermines and nullifies the love, and grace, and kindness of God herein to us; for we had been as well without it. With much evidence, therefore, may we

conclude that it was necessary that the second Adam, Christ our surety, should obey as well as suffer in our room, in order to open a door for our justification and eternal life. And, accordingly, we may observe that the favors shown to a sinful, guilty world, on Christ's account, are, in Scripture, promised under the notion of a reward to Christ's virtue; for upon making his soul an offering for sin, which was the highest act of virtue, it was promised that he should see his seed; prolong his days; have the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hands; and that he should see the travail of his soul, and justify many. (Isaiah liii. 10, 12.)

Therefore, in order to a genuine compliance with the gospel by faith in Jesus Christ, we must see how far we are from righteousness; that all our seeming righteousness is as filthy rags; that we have nothing to recommend us to God; that that there is nothing in us rendering us fit to be beloved by him, or meet to receive any favor at his hands; but every thing to the contrary, to the end we may see our need of Christ; of Christ, "to be made of God unto us, righteousness," and our necessity of being "found in him, having on his righteousness," for this is the design of the gospel, to bring us to look "to be accepted with God only in his beloved," and to be "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ," "without the deeds of the law," ourselves being considered as being, in ourselves, ungodly.

And under a sense how far we are from righteousness; that we have, after all the attainments of this life, no righteousness fit to be mentioned before God; nothing fit to recommend us to his favor, but are still, in ourselves, infinitely unworthy of his love, or the least favor from him; I say, under a deep, effectual sense of this, we must live all our days, to the end that we may never venture to come before God, as the Pharisee did, emboldened by our own goodness, but always as the chief of sinners, desiring to be found only in Christ, not having on our own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith; and so hereby be influenced to live the life we live in the flesh, by faith on the Son of God, as St. Paul always did, and as the gospel would have all others do. (1 Tim. i. 15. Phil. iii. 9. Gal. ii. 20; iii. 11.)

To conclude: Thus we see the grounds of the necessity there was for a Mediator and Redeemer, to make satisfaction for sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness; and so open an honorable way for mercy to come out after a rebellious, guilty world; and a way in which sinners may, with safety, return to God.

SECTION IV.

CONCERNING THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST, AND OF HIS SATISFACTION AND MERITS.

I PROCEED now to consider,

2. What has been done to make satisfaction for sin, and to answer the demands of the preceptive part of the law; and wherein the sufficiency of the same consists. And

In the *first* place, what has been done has been already hinted; and it may be summed up in a few words. It comprehends all that Christ has done and suffered, in his life and at his death. For us he was born; for us he lived; for us he died. He did all on our account, being thereunto appointed by his Father. But because his obedience and sufferings were most eminent and remarkable, when, according to the command he had received of his Father, he laid down his life for us, and offered himself a sacrifice for our sins; and because, with a view to this, he became flesh, and dwelt among us, therefore the Scriptures do more frequently attribute our redemption to what was done then. Hence, we are said to be "redeemed by his blood;" to be "justified by his blood." And all spiritual blessings are frequently represented as the fruits and effects of his death. (Gal. iii. 13, 14.) The sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed out this as the great atonement. And to this the penmen of the New Testament seem, in a special manner, to have their eyes, as the great propitiation for sin. Thus the first Adam was to have yielded a perfect obedience to the divine law in every thing; but that special prohibition, touching the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was in a peculiar manner to try him, that it might be seen whether he would be in subjection to God in every thing. So, in the garden and upon the cross, our Savior's spirit of obedience was tried and discovered, and his obedience was perfected and his sufferings completed; and so here, in a more eminent manner, the law was honored, and justice satisfied; and so the door of mercy opened for a sinful, guilty world. But,

Secondly. As to the sufficiency of what has been done to answer the ends proposed, let these things be considered: —

(1.) That the person undertaking, as Mediator and Redeemer, was of sufficient dignity and worth.

(2.) That he was sufficiently authorized to act in such a capacity.

(3.) That what he has done is perfectly suited, in its own nature, to answer all the ends proposed.

1. Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, as to his person, was fit for the mediatorial office and work. He was of sufficient dignity and worth; being, by nature, God; equal with the Father; the brightness of his glory; the express image of his person. (Phil. ii. Heb. i.) He was God, (John i. 1,) as well as man, (ver. 14.) And therefore his blood was considered and valued as being the blood of God. (Acts xx. 28.) And hence it is called precious blood, (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.) As to his person, he was equal with God the Father in point of worth and dignity; and it was as much for him to obey and die in the room of a guilty world, as it would have been for God the Father himself. In point of dignity and worth, there was none superior to him. He was upon a level with God the Father. He was his equal and fellow. "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow." He was as glorious, as honorable, as lovely. He was, therefore, fit for the office; able to answer all the ends of God, the Governor of the world; of his holiness and justice, law and government, and perfectly to secure the divine honor, viewed in every point of light. The infinite dignity of his nature, as God, made him capable of an obedience of infinite moral excellence, and capable of making a full satisfaction for the infinite evil of sin. He could magnify the law, and make it honorable in a more illustrious manner than all the angels in heaven and men on earth put together; by how much he was more excellent than they all. If the Son of God obey and die, it is enough: God and his law are forever secure. Thus his being, by nature, God, rendered him of sufficient dignity for the office and work of a Mediator. (Heb. ix. 14.)

And this it was, also, which made him capable of undertaking. As he was God, he was under no obligations, on his own account, to obey a law made for a creature; and he had an absolute right to himself. Every person, that is a mere creature, is under natural obligations to perfect obedience on his own account; nor is he his own to dispose of. But the Son of God was above a mere creature; he was a divine person, and, previous to his undertaking, was under no obligation to obedience; he had an original right to himself, and was not, by nature, under the law; he was, therefore, at his own disposal, and at full liberty to undertake in our room. He had power to assume human nature, and be made under the law for us, and obey for us, and suffer for us; for he might do what he would with his own. (John x. 17, 18.) The sufficiency of Christ being thus originally founded in his divinity, hence this is the first thing the apostle to the Hebrews insists upon

in order to explain, clear up, and confirm, the safety of the way of salvation through his blood. (Heb. i.) To clear up and confirm the safety of the way of salvation, through the blood of Christ, is evidently the scope and design of that epistle, as is manifest from the ten first chapters; particularly see chapter x. ver. 19—22. And in order to show the safety of this way, he insists upon the excellency of his person, and the nature of his office; his being called, appointed, and authorized, and his actually going through the work of our redemption; which, together with some occasional exhortations, digressions, etc., is the substance of this discourse, from chap. i. ver. 1, to chap. x. ver. 23.

Thus, as God, he was of infinite dignity and worth; as God, he was at liberty to undertake. He had an estate, if I may so speak, of his own, and could pay the debt of another with what was his own, and purchase for us an inheritance. And I may add, that, as he was the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, there was a suitableness that he, rather than either of the other persons, should be appointed to this work. The Father sustains the character of Supreme Lord and Governor; asserts the rights of the Godhead; maintains the honor of his law and government. The Son becomes mediator between God and man, to open a door for God to show mercy to man consistently with his honor, and for man to return to God with safety. The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier, to work in sinners to will and to do, and recover and bring them to repent and return to God, through Jesus Christ. Thus the gospel teaches us to believe. (Eph. ii. 18.)

He also was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and, for our sakes, was made under the law, to the end that, in our nature, he might fulfil all righteousness, and bear the curse. As he was one with the Father, he was fit to be intrusted with his Father's honor. As he was Immanuel, God with us, he was fit to be intrusted with our salvation. As he was God-man, he was fit to be a mediator between God and man. His humanity rendered him capable to appear in the form of a servant, and to become obedient unto death; and his divinity rendered his obedience and suffering sufficient to answer the ends designed. This is he of whom the text speaks — "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." He gave him; he appointed him to the work; he put him into the office; he anointed him, and then he laid on him the iniquities of us all, and set him forth to be a propitiation. Which brings me to consider,

(2.) That he was sufficiently authorized to be a mediator between God and man; to take the place of sinners, and to obey

and die in the room of a guilty world. God, the supreme Governor of the world, had sufficient power and authority to appoint the first Adam to be a representative for his posterity, to act in their room; and, by the same authority, he has appointed his Son, the second Adam, to be a second public head. (Rom. v. 12—19.) By divine constitution, the first Adam was made a public person; and by the divine constitution, the second Adam is made such too: both receive all their authority to act in that capacity from the constitution of God. The calling, appointment, and authority of Christ, to take upon him this office and work of a mediator and high priest, is particularly treated of in the fifth chapter to the Hebrews. He was "called of God, as was Aaron." He took not this high office upon himself, but was invested with it by his Father. He was "called of God a high priest, after the order of Melchizedec." His Father proposed the office and the work, and he willingly undertook. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." And hence Christ says, he did not come of himself, but was sent of his Father. (John vii. 28, 29.) And that he did not come to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him. (John vi. 38.) And his Father acknowledges him as such by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Without such a divine constitution, the death of Christ could have been of no benefit to mankind. As if an innocent man should offer to die in the room of a condemned criminal, and should actually lay down his life, yet it could be of no benefit to the poor criminal, unless the civil government had authorized him so to do; that is, unless, by some act, they had declared that his life should be accepted, in the eye of the law, instead of the criminal's. The application is easy. Thus Christ was called and put into his mediatorial office, and authorized to the work by God, the supreme Governor of the world. And hence, in allusion to the Jewish custom of anointing men, when advanced to some high office and important trust,—so Aaron was anointed priest, and David was anointed king,—in allusion, I say, to this, he is called *Christ*, which is, by interpretation, the *Anointed*. Thus, as to his personal dignity, he was sufficient to undertake; and thus was he authorized to do so. And,

(3.) What he has done is perfectly suited, in its own nature, to answer all the ends proposed; that is, to secure the honor of God; the honor of his holiness, justice, and truth; his law, government, and sacred authority; and so open a door for the free and honorable exercise of his mercy and grace towards a

sinful, guilty world, and a way in which sinners might return to God with divine acceptance. God, the supreme Governor of the world, knew upon what grounds there was need of a mediator; what ends he had to answer, and how they might be answered in the best manner. According to the counsel of his own will, in his infinite wisdom, he laid the very plan which is now revealed to us in the gospel. He appointed one to be a mediator whom he judged fit; put him into the office, and appointed him his work: all this work Jesus Christ has done. He has finished the work which the Father gave him to do, (John xvii. 4; xix. 30;) and so has been faithful to him that appointed him. (Heb. iii. 2.) So that herefrom we might be assured, that what he has done is most perfectly suited, in its own nature, to answer all the ends proposed, although it were quite beyond us to understand how. But, by the help of the word and spirit of God, we may be able to enter a little way into this wonderful and glorious mystery.

It was fit the first Adam, as the representative and public head of mankind, should, as a condition of the everlasting love and favor of God, have continued in a most willing and perfect subjection to God, the Governor of the world, valuing his honor and glory above all things: this was God's due. This would have satisfied God's holiness; for holiness is satisfied when the thing which is right and fit is done: holiness wants no more, but is then content and well pleased; and, upon this condition, mankind might have been considered as subjects fit for the divine favor, and might have received the promised reward, to the honor of the divine holiness and goodness. Now, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has, by his Father's appointment and approbation, assumed our nature; taken Adam's place; done that which was Adam's duty in our room and stead, as another public head; obeyed the law God gave his creature — a law which he was not under, but in consequence of his undertaking to stand in our room and stead. The creature fails of paying that honor to the Governor of the world which is his due from the creature. A God lays aside his glory, appears in the form of a servant, and becomes obedient; and so, in the creature's stead and behalf, pays that honor to the Governor of the world which was the creature's duty: and thus the Governor of the world is considered, respected, treated, and honored, as being what he is, by man; that is, by their representative Christ Jesus, God-man-mediator. And now, hereby, God's right to the obedience of his creatures, and their unworthiness of his favor upon any other condition, are publicly owned and acknowledged: the debt is owned, and the debt is paid by the Son of

God; and so holiness is satisfied; for holiness is satisfied when the thing that is right and fit is done. And now, this door being opened, mankind may, through Christ, be considered as subjects to whom God may show favor consistently with his honor: yea, the divine holiness may be honored by granting all favors as a reward to Christ's virtue and obedience.

Again, it was fit, if any intelligent creature should at any time swerve at all from the perfect will of God, that he should forever lose his favor, and fall under his everlasting displeasure, for a thing so infinitely wrong. And in such a case, it was fit the Governor of the world should be infinitely displeased, and publicly testify his infinite displeasure, by a punishment adequate thereto, inflicted on the sinning creature. This would satisfy justice; for justice is satisfied when the thing which is wrong is punished according to its desert. Hence it was fit when, by a constitution, holy, just, and good, Adam was made a public head, to represent his race, and act not only for himself, but for all his posterity; it was fit, I say, that he and all his race, for his first transgression, should lose the favor and fall under the everlasting displeasure of the Almighty. It was fit that God should be infinitely displeased at so abominable a thing; and that, as Governor of the world, he should publicly bear testimony against it, as an infinite evil, by inflicting the infinite punishment the law threatened, that is, by damning the whole world. This would have satisfied justice; for justice is satisfied when justice takes place; when the guilty are treated with that severity they ought to be; when sin is punished as being what it is. Now, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has, by his Father's appointment and approbation, assumed our nature; taken the place of a guilty world; and had not only Adam's first transgression, but the iniquities of us all laid upon him; and, in our room and stead, has suffered the wrath of God, the curse of the law, offering up himself a sacrifice to God for the sins of men. And hereby the infinite evil of sin, and the righteousness of the law, are publicly owned and acknowledged, and the deserved punishment voluntarily submitted unto by man, that is, by their representative. And thus justice is satisfied; for justice is satisfied when justice takes place. And sin is now treated as being what it is, as much as if God had damned the whole world; and God, as Governor, appears as severe against it. And thus the righteousness of God is declared and manifested, by Christ's being set forth to be a propitiation for sin; and he may now be just, and yet justify him that believes in Jesus.

By all this the law is magnified and made honorable. On

the one hand, were any in all God's dominions tempted to think that the great Governor of the world had dealt too severely with man, in suspending his everlasting welfare upon the condition of perfect obedience? God practically answers, and says, "I did as well by mankind as I should desire to have been done by myself, had I been in their case, and they in mine; for when my Son, who is as myself, came to stand in their stead, I required the same condition of him." And what the Father says, the Son confirms: he practically owns the law to be holy, just, and good, and the debt to be due, and pays it most willingly to the last mite, without any objection; which was as if he had said, "There was all the reason in the world that the everlasting welfare of mankind should be suspended on that condition; nor could I have desired it to have been otherwise, had I myself been in their case." On the other hand, were any tempted to think that God had been too severe in threatening everlasting damnation for sin? Here this point is also cleared up. God the Father practically says, that he did as he would have been done by, had he been in their case, and they in his; for when his Son, his second self, comes to stand in their place, he abates nothing, but appears as great an enemy to sin, in his conduct, as if he had damned the whole world. His Son also owns the sentence just; he takes the cup and drinks it off. Considering the infinite dignity of his person, his sufferings were equivalent to the eternal damnation of such worms as we.

Thus the law is magnified and made honorable; and, at the same time, the honor of God's government and sacred authority is secured: and, I may add, so is also the honor of his truth; for he has been true to his threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" for on that very day the second Adam virtually laid down his life in the room and stead of a guilty world. He is the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. So that now there is no room left, for those who will view things impartially, to have undue thoughts of the Governor of the world; nor any thing done to expose his government to reproach, or his authority to contempt. The honor of the divine government and authority appears as sacred and tremendous as if he had damned the whole world; and although sinners will take occasion to sin, and be encouraged in their ways, because grace abounds, yet the Governor of the world has not given the occasion. In his conduct, the whole of it considered, he appears as severe against sin as if he had damned the whole world, without any mixture of the least mercy. The infinite dignity of his Son causes those sufferings he bore in our room

to be as bright a display of the divine holiness and justice, as if all the human race had, for their sin, been cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torments ascended forever and ever.

Moreover, by all this, a way is opened for the free and honorable exercise of mercy and grace towards a sinful, guilty world. It may be done consistently with the honor of God, of his holiness and justice, his law and government, his truth and sacred authority; for the honor of all these is effectually secured. It may be done to the honor of divine grace; for now it appears that God did not pity the world under a notion that they had been by him severely and hardly dealt with, nor under a notion that it would have been too severe to have proceeded against them according to law. The law is not made void, but established. No reflections are cast upon the divine government. And grace appears to be free, taking its rise, not from any thing in us, but merely from self-moving goodness and sovereign mercy. This way of salvation is suited to set off the grace of God to advantage, and make it appear to be what it is.

Having thus finished the work assigned him, he arose from the dead, he ascended on high, he entered into the holy of holies, into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us, as our great High Priest. (Heb. ix.) And here, as God-man-mediator, he is exalted to the highest honor, has a name above every name, sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having all power in heaven and earth committed unto him, and ever lives to make intercession, and is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. Such is the virtue of his righteousness and blood, and such is his honor and interest in the court of heaven, and such is his faithfulness to all that believe in him, that now it is perfectly safe to return to God through him, and venture our everlasting all upon his worth and merits, mediation and intercession. "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace."

Thus we see what necessity there was of satisfaction for sin, and that the demands of the law should be answered. And thus we see what has been done for these purposes, and its sufficiency to answer all the ends proposed. The Mediator was of sufficient dignity, as to his person; he had sufficient authority, as to his office; and he has faithfully done his work. And now the honor of God's holiness and justice, law and government, and sacred authority, is secured; and a way is opened in which he may honorably put his designs of mercy into execution, and sinners safely return unto him. And now,

before I proceed to consider more particularly what way is opened and what methods God has entered upon for the recovery of sinful, guilty creatures to himself, I shall make a few remarks upon what has been said.

Remark 1. As the law is a transcript of the divine nature, so also is the gospel. The law is holy, just, and good; and is, as it were, the image of the holiness, justice, and goodness of God; and so also is the gospel. The law insists upon God's honor from the creature, and ordains that his everlasting welfare shall be suspended upon that condition; and the gospel says amen to it. The law insists upon it, that it is an infinite evil for the creature to swerve in the least from the most perfect will of God, and that it deserves an infinite punishment; and the gospel says amen to it. The law discovered also the infinite goodness of God, in its being suited to make the obedient creature perfectly happy; but the gospel still more abundantly displays the infinite goodness and wonderful free grace of God. The law was holy, just, and good, and the image of God's holiness, justice, and goodness; but the gospel is more eminently so. In it the holiness, justice, and goodness of God are painted more to the life, in a manner truly surprising, and beyond our comprehension; yea, to the amazement of angels, who desire to look and pry into this wonderful contrivance. (1 Pet. i. 12.)

Here, in this glass, the glory of the Lord is to be beheld. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) The glory of God is to be seen in the face of Christ. (2 Cor. iv. 6.) What has been done by him in this affair, discovers the glorious moral beauty of the divine nature. Much of God is to be seen in the moral law; it is his image: but more of God is to be seen in the gospel; for herein his image is exhibited more to the life, more clearly and conspicuously.

The moral excellence of the moral law sufficiently evidences that it is from God: it is so much like God, that it is evident that it is from God. So the moral excellence of the gospel sufficiently evidences that it is from God: it is so much like him, that it is evident that it is from him; it is his very image; therefore it is his offspring; it is a copy of his moral perfections, and they are the original. It is so much like God, that it is perfectly to his mind; he is pleased with it; he delights to save sinners in this way; and if ever this gospel becomes the power of God to our salvation, it will make us like unto God; it will transform us into his image, and we shall be pleased with this way of salvation, and delight to be saved in such a way — a way wherein God is honored, the sinner

humbled, the law established, sin discountenanced, boasting excluded, and grace glorified.

If any man has a taste for moral excellence, a heart to account God glorious for being what he is, he cannot but see the moral excellence of the law, and love it, and conform to it; because it is the image of God; and so he cannot but see the moral excellence of the gospel, and believe it, and love it, and comply with it; for it is also the image of God. He that can see the moral beauty of the original, cannot but see the moral beauty of the image drawn to the life. He, therefore, that despises the gospel, and is an enemy to the law, even he is at enmity against God himself. (Rom. viii. 7.) Ignorance of the glory of God, and enmity against him, makes men ignorant of the glory of the law and of the gospel, and enemies to both. Did men know and "love him that begat, they would love that which is begotten of him." "He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

And therefore a genuine compliance with the gospel supposes that "he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And a sight and sense of the moral excellence of the gospel way of salvation assures the heart of its divinity; and hereby a supernatural and divine assent to the truth of the gospel is begotten in the heart. And a sense of the infinite dignity of the Mediator, and that he was sent of God, and that he has finished the work which was given him to do, and so opened and consecrated a new and living way of access to God; together with a sense of the full and free invitation to sinners to return to God in this way, given in the gospel, and the free grace of God therein discovered, and his readiness to be reconciled; a spiritual sight and sense of these things, I say, imboldens the heart of an humbled sinner to trust in Christ, and to return to God through him. Hence the apostle to the Hebrews, having gone through this subject in a doctrinal way, in the conclusion makes this practical inference: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith."

Remark 2. From what has been said, we may observe, that the necessity of satisfaction for sin, and of the preceptive part of the law being answered, takes its rise from the moral per-

fections of the divine nature, and the moral fitness of things; and therefore a true idea of God and a just sense of the moral fitness of things, will naturally lead us to see the necessity of satisfaction for sin, etc., and predispose us to understand and believe what is held forth by divine revelation to that purpose. On the other hand, where a true idea of the moral perfections of God, and the moral fitness of things, is not; but, on the contrary, very wrong notions of the divine Being, and of the true nature of things, there will naturally be an indisposition and an aversion to such principles; nor will what the gospel teaches about them be readily understood or believed. And doubtless it was this which originally led some to deny the necessity of satisfaction for sin, and others to go a step further, to deny that Christ ever designed to make any. "He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God."

Remark 3. The death of Christ was not designed, at all, to take away the evil nature of sin, or its ill deserts; for sin is unalterably what it is, and cannot be made a less evil. But the death of Christ was rather, on the contrary, to acknowledge and manifest the evil nature and ill desert of sin, to the end that pardoning mercy might not make it seem to be a less evil than it really is. So that, although God may freely pardon all our sins, and entitle us to eternal life for Christ's sake, yet he does look upon us, considered merely as in ourselves, to be as much to blame as ever, and to deserve hell as much as ever; and therefore we are always to look upon ourselves so too. And hence we ought always to live under a sense of the freeness and riches of God's grace in pardoning our sins, and under a sense of our own vileness and ill desert, in ourselves, upon the account of them, although pardoned. "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." But this is not the way of hypocrites; for, being once confident that their sins are pardoned, their shame, sorrow, and abasement are soon at an end; and having no fear of hell, they have but little sense of sin; and, from the doctrine of free grace, they are imboldened, as it were, to sin upon free cost. But thus saith the Lord, "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."

Remark 4. Nor was the death of Christ designed to draw forth the pity of God towards a guilty world; for God could

find it in his heart, of his mere goodness, without any motive from without, to give his only-begotten Son to die for sinners. But this was greater goodness than it would have been to have saved mankind by an act of sovereign grace, without any Mediator; it was a more expensive way. As, for an earthly sovereign to give his only son to die for a traitor, that the traitor might live, would be a greater act of goodness than to pardon the traitor, of mere sovereignty. It was not, therefore, because the goodness of the divine nature needed any motive to draw it forth into exercise, that Jesus Christ obeyed, and died in our room; but it was to answer the ends of moral government, and to secure the honor of the moral Governor; and so open a way for the honorable exercise of the divine goodness, which, in its own nature, is infinite, free, and self-moving, and wants no motive from without to draw it forth into action. And the same, no doubt, may be said of Christ's intercession in heaven. We are, therefore, in our approaches to God, not to look to Christ to persuade the Father to pity and pardon us, as though he was not willing to show mercy of his own accord; but we are to look to Christ, and go to God through him, for all we want, under a sense that we are, in ourselves, too bad to be pitied without some sufficient salvo to the divine honor, or to have any mercy shown us. And, therefore, when we look to be justified by free grace, it must be only through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; who has been "set forth to be a propitiation for sin, to declare God's righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Remark 5. Some of the peculiar principles of the Antinomians seem to take their rise from wrong notions of the nature of satisfaction for sin. They seem to have no right notions of the moral perfections of God, and of the natural obligations we are under to him, nor any right apprehensions of the nature and ends of moral government, nor any ideas of the grounds, nature, and ends of satisfaction for sin; a right sense of which things, tends powerfully to promote a holy fear, and reverential awe of the dread Majesty of heaven and earth; a sense of the infinite evil of sin; brokenness of heart, tenderness of conscience; a humble, holy, watchful, prayerful temper and life, as well as to prepare the way for faith in the blood of Christ. But they seem to have no right apprehensions of these things. They seem to consider God merely under the notion of a creditor, and us merely under the notion of debtors; and to suppose, when Christ upon the cross said, "It is finished," he then paid the whole debt of the elect, and saw the book crossed, whereby

all their sins were actually blotted out and forgiven; and now, all that remains is for the Holy Spirit immediately to reveal it to one and another that he is elected; that for him Christ died, and that his sins are all pardoned; which revelation he is firmly to believe, and never again to doubt of; and this they call faith. From which it seems they understand nothing rightly about God or Christ, the law or gospel. For nothing is more evident than that God is, in Scripture, considered as righteous Governor of the world, and we as criminals, guilty before him; and the evident design of Christ's death was, to be a propitiation for sin, to declare and manifest God's righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 9—26.) And the gospel knows nothing about a sinner's being justified in any other way than by faith, and by consequence, in order of nature, not till after faith. The gospel knows nothing about satisfaction for sin, in their sense; but every where teaches that the elect, as well as others, are equally under condemnation and the wrath of God; yea, are children of wrath while unbelievers. (John iii. 18. 36. Eph. ii. 3. Acts iii. 19.)

Again; while they consider God merely under the character of a creditor, and us merely as debtors, and Christ as paying the whole debt of the elect; now, because Christ obeyed the law, as well as suffered its penalty, therefore they seem to think that Christ has done all their duty, so that now they have nothing to do but firmly to believe that Christ has done all: they have nothing to do with the law, — no, not so much as to be their rule to live by, — but are set at full liberty from all obligations to any duty whatsoever; not understanding that "Christ gave himself to redeem his people from all iniquity, and purify them to himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works," and not understanding that our natural obligations to perfect obedience are not capable of being dissolved, (Matt. v. 17,) and not understanding that our obligations to all holy living are mightily increased by the grace of the gospel. (Rom. xii. 1.) Indeed, they seem to understand nothing rightly, but to view every thing in a wrong light; and instead of considering Christ as a friend to holiness, as one "that loves righteousness and hates iniquity," they make him "a minister of sin," and turn the grace of God into wantonness. All their notions tend to render their consciences insensible of the evil of sin; to cherish spiritual pride and carnal security, and to open a door to all ungodliness.

SECTION V.

SHOWING A DOOR OF MERCY IS OPENED BY JESUS CHRIST FOR A GUILTY WORLD.

I COME now to another thing proposed, namely,

III. To show more particularly what way to life has been opened, by what Christ, our Mediator, has done and suffered.

In general, from what has been said, we may see that the mighty bar which lay in the way of mercy is removed by Jesus Christ; and now a door is opened, and a way provided, wherein the great Governor of the world may, consistently with the honor of his holiness and justice; his law and government, and sacred authority, and to the glory of his grace, put in execution all his designs of mercy towards a sinful, guilty, undone world. But to be more particular,

1. A way is opened, wherein the great Governor of the world may, consistently with his honor, and to the glory of his grace, pardon, and receive to favor, and entitle to eternal life, all and every one of the human race, who shall cordially fall in with the gospel design; believe in Christ, and return home to God through him.

What Christ has done, is, in fact, sufficient to open a door for God, through him, to become reconcilable to the whole world. The sufferings of Christ, all things considered, have as much displayed God's hatred to sin, and as much secured the honor of his law, as if the whole world had been damned; as none will deny, who believe the infinite dignity of his divine nature. God may now, therefore, through Jesus Christ, stand ready to pardon the whole world. There is nothing in the way. And the obedience of Christ has brought as much honor to God, and to his law, as the perfect obedience of Adam, and of all his race, would have done; the rights of the Godhead are as much asserted and maintained. So that there is nothing in the way, but that mankind may, through Christ, be received into full favor, and entitled to eternal life. God may stand ready to do it, consistently with his honor. What Christ has done is every way sufficient. "All things are now ready."

And God has expressly declared that it was the design of Christ's death to open this door of mercy to all. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That whosoever, of all mankind, whether Jew

or Greek, bond or free, rich or poor, without any exception, though the chief of sinners, that believes, should be saved." For this end, God gave his only-begotten Son. "He set him forth to be a propitiation for sin, that he might be just, and the justifier of him, — without any exception, let him be who he will, — that believeth in Jesus."

Hence, the apostles received a universal commission — "Go, teach all nations." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Accordingly, the apostles proclaimed the news of pardon and peace to every one; offered mercy to all without exception, and invited all without distinction. "He that believeth shall be saved;" "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," were declarations they made to all in general. To the Jewish nations they were sent to say, in the name of the King of heaven, "I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage." And as to the Gentile nations, their orders ran thus, "Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye find, bid to the marriage." To the Jewish nation God had been used to send his servants the prophets, in the days of old, saying, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come." "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." And now orders are given that the whole world be invited to a reconciliation to God through Christ. "Whosoever will, let him come; and he that cometh shall in no wise be cast out." Thus Christ has opened a door; and thus, the great Governor of the world may, consistently with his honor, be reconciled to any that believe and repent. And thus he actually stands ready.

And now, all things being thus ready on God's side, and the offers, invitations, and calls of the gospel being to every one, without exception; hence, it is attributed to sinners themselves, that they perish at last, even to their own voluntary conduct. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." And they are considered as being perfectly inexcusable. "Now they have no cloak for their sin." And all because a way is opened, in which they might be delivered from condemnation; but they will not comply therewith. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And therefore, in Scripture account, they stand exposed to a more aggravated punishment in the world to come. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida, etc. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be

brought down to hell, etc. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for these cities; because they repented not."

And now, because the door of mercy is thus opened to the whole world by the blood of Christ, therefore, in Scripture, he is called the Savior of the world. "The Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world." "A propitiation for the sins of the whole world." "That gave himself a ransom for all." "And tasted death for every man." The plain sense of all which expressions may, I think, without any danger of mistake, be learnt from John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* And, indeed, was not the door of mercy opened to all, indefinitely, how could God sincerely offer mercy to all? Or heartily invite all? Or justly blame those who do not accept? Or righteously punish them for neglecting so great salvation?

Besides, if Christ died merely for the elect, that is, to the intent that they, only upon believing, might, consistently with the divine honor, be received to favor, then God could not, consistently with his justice, save any besides, if they should believe, "For without shedding of blood, there can be no remission." If Christ did not design, by his death, to open a door for all to be saved conditionally, that is, upon the condition of faith, then there is no such door opened: the door is not opened wider than Christ designed it should be; there is nothing more purchased by his death than he intended: if this benefit was not intended, then it is not procured; if it be not procured, then the non-elect cannot any of them be saved, consistently with divine justice. And, by consequence, if this be the case, then, first, the non-elect have no right at all to take any, the least encouragement, from the death of Christ, or the invitations of the gospel, to return to God through Christ, in hopes of acceptance; for there are no grounds of encouragement given. Christ did not die for them in any sense. It is impossible their sins should be pardoned consistently with

* "I am ready to profess," says the famous Dr. Twisse, "and that, I suppose, as out of the mouths of all our divines, that every one who hears the gospel, (without distinction between elect or reprobate,) is bound to believe that Christ died for him, so far as to procure both the pardon of his sins and the salvation of his soul, in case he believes and repents." Again, "As Peter could not have been saved, unless he had believed and repented, so Judas might have been saved, if he had done so." Again, "John iii. 16, gives a fair light of exposition to those places where Christ is said to have died for the sins of the world; yea, of the whole world, to wit, in this manner; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." — *Dr. Twisse, on "The Riches of God's Love to the Vessels of Mercy,"* etc.

justice; as much impossible as if there had never been a Savior: as if Christ had never died; and so there is no encouragement at all for them; and therefore it would be presumption in them to take any; all which is apparently contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel, which every where invites all, and gives equal encouragement to all. "Come, for all things are ready," said Christ to the reprobate Jews. And if the non-elect have no right to take any encouragement from the death of Christ, and the invitations of the gospel, to return to God through him, in hopes of acceptance, then, secondly, no man at all can rationally take any encouragement until he knows that he is elected; because, until then, he cannot know that there is any ground for encouragement. It is not rational to take encouragement before we see sufficient grounds for it; yea, it is presumption to do so. But no man can see sufficient grounds of encouragement to trust in Christ, and to return to God through him, in hopes of acceptance, unless he sees that God may, through Christ, consistently with his honor, accept and save him, and is willing so to do. If God can, and is actually willing to save any that comes, then there is no objection. I may come, and any may come; "all things are ready: there is bread enough, and to spare." But if God is reconcilable only to the elect, then I may not come. I dare not come: it would be presumption to come till I know that I am elected. And how can I know that? Why, not by any thing in all the Bible. While an unbeliever, it is impossible I should know it by any thing in Scripture. It is no where said, in express words, that I, by name, am elected, and there are no rules of trial laid down in such a case. And how can I, therefore, in this case, ever know that I am elected, but by an immediate revelation from heaven? And how shall I know that this revelation is true? How shall I dare to venture my soul upon it? The gospel does not teach me to look for any such revelation, nor give any marks whereby I may know when it is from God, and when from the devil. Thus, an invincible bar is laid in my way to life. I must know that I am one of the elect, before I can see any encouragement to believe in Christ; because none but the elect have any more business to do so than the devils; but if I am one of the elect, yet it is impossible I should know it till afterwards, besides, all this is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel. Whosoever will, let him come; whosoever comes, shall in no wise be cast out; whosoever believes shall be saved. And contrary to the experience of all true believers, who, in their first return to God through Christ, always

take all their encouragement from the gospel, and lay the weight of their souls upon the truth of that, and venture their eternal all upon this bottom, and not upon the truth of any new revelation. They venture their all upon the truths already revealed in the gospel, and not upon the truth of any proposition not revealed there.

So that, let us view this point in what light we will, nothing is more clear and certain than that Christ died; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And God may now be just, and yet justify any of the race of Adam that believe in Jesus; and he stands ready to do so. And these things being true, the servants, upon good grounds, might, in their master's name, tell the obstinate Jews, who did not belong to the election of grace, and who finally refused to hearken to the calls of the gospel, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." And if they had come, they would have been heartily welcome; the provision made was sufficient, and the invitation sincere. Jesus wept over them, saying, "O that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!" So that there was nothing to hinder, had they but been willing. But it seems they were otherwise disposed; and, therefore, "they made light of it, and went their ways; one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." And in this glass, we may see the very nature of all mankind, and how all would actually do, if not prevented by divine grace. Justly, therefore, at the day of judgment, will this be the condemnation, that light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light. For certainly, if mankind are so perversely bad, that, notwithstanding their natural obligations to God, and the unreasonableness of their original apostasy, they will yet persist in their rebellion; and, after all the glorious provision and kind invitations of the gospel, will not return to God, through Christ. I say, certainly, God is not obliged to come out after them, and, by his all-conquering grace, irresistibly reclaim them; but may justly let every man take his own course, and run his own ruin. And an aggravated damnation will every such person deserve in the coming world, for neglecting so great salvation.

And now, if Christ's atonement and merits be thus sufficient for all, and if God stands ready to be reconciled to all, and if all are invited to return and come, hence, then, we may learn that it is safe for any of the poor, sinful, guilty, lost, undone

race of Adam to return to God in this way. They shall surely find acceptance with God: they may come "without money, without price; and he that cometh shall in no wise be cast out."

And hence we may see upon what grounds it is that the poor, convinced, humbled sinner is encouraged and imboldened to venture his all upon Christ, and return to God through him. It is because any poor, sinful, guilty, hell-deserving wretch may come; any in the world; the worst in the world; the vilest and most odious and despicable; for such he actually takes himself to be. And if he did not see that there was an open door for such, for any such, for all such, he would doubt, and that with good reason, too, whether he might safely come. But when he understands and believes the gospel revelation, and so is assured that it is safe for any, for all, the vilest and the worst, — now the peculiar vileness and unworthiness which he sees in himself ceases to be an objection. He sees it safe for any, and therefore for him; and hence takes courage, and is imboldened to venture his all upon the free grace of God, through Jesus Christ, and so returns in hopes of acceptance. Now, does this poor sinner venture upon a safe foundation, or does he not? He takes it for granted, that the supreme Governor of the world can, consistently with his honor, show mercy to any that come to him through Christ; and he takes it for granted that he stands ready to do so, even to the vilest and worst; that the door of mercy stands wide open, and whosoever will may come. And, upon these principles, he takes encouragement to return to God, in hopes of acceptance, and, from a sense of his own wants, and of the glory and all-sufficiency of the divine nature, of the blessedness there is in being the Lord's, devoted to him, and living upon him, he does return with all his heart; and to God he gives himself, to be forever his; and if the gospel be true, surely he must be safe. The truth of the gospel is the foundation of all; for upon that, and that only, he builds; not upon works of righteousness which he has done, not upon any immediate revelation of pardon, or the love of Christ to him in particular; but merely upon gospel principles. If they, therefore, prove true in the coming world, then will he receive the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul. But to return: —

Thus we see that, by the death of Christ, there is a wide door opened for divine mercy to exercise and display itself. The supreme Governor of the world may, consistently with his honor, now seat himself upon a throne of grace, and proclaim the news of pardon and peace through a guilty world;

and it is perfectly safe for any of the guilty race of Adam to return unto him through Jesus Christ. And now, were mankind in a disposition to be heartily sorry for their apostasy from God, and disposed to esteem it their indispensable duty and highest blessedness to return; were this the case, the joyful news of a Savior, and of pardon and peace through him, would fly through the world like lightning, and every heart would be melted with love, and sorrow, and gratitude; and all the nations of the earth would come, and fall down in the dust before the Lord, and bless his holy name, and devote themselves to him forever, lamenting, in the bitterness of their hearts, that ever they did break away from their subjection to such a God. And were mankind sensible of their sinful, guilty, undone state by law, and disposed to justify the law, and condemn themselves; and were they sensible of the holiness and justice of the great Governor of the world, they would soon see their need of such a Mediator as Christ Jesus, and soon see the wonderful grace of the gospel, and soon see the glory of this way of salvation, and so know it to be from God, believe it, and fall in with it; and all the world would repent and convert of their own accord; and so all the world might be saved without any more to do. But, instead of this, such is the temper of mankind, that there is not one in the world, that, of his own accord, is disposed to have any such regard to God, or sorrow for his apostasy, or inclination to repent and return; nor do men once imagine that they are in a state so wretched and undone, and stand in such a perishing need of Christ and free grace; and, therefore, they are ready to make light of the glad tidings of the gospel, and go their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. Nor is there one, of all the human race, disposed, of his own accord, to lay down the weapons of his rebellion, and return to God by Jesus Christ. So that all will come to nothing, and not one be ever brought home to God, unless something further be done; unless some methods, and methods very effectual, be used.

But that God should come out after such an apostate race, who, without any grounds, have turned enemies to him, and, without any reason, refuse to be reconciled; and that after all the glorious provision and kind invitations of the gospel; that God, I say, should come out after such, and reclaim them by his own sovereign and all-conquering grace, might seem to be going counter to the holiness and justice of his nature, and to tend to expose his law, and government, and sacred authority, to contempt; inasmuch as they so eminently deserve to be consumed by the fire of his wrath. Therefore,

(2.) Jesus Christ did, by his obedience and death, open such a door of mercy, as that the supreme Governor of the world might, consistently with his honor, take what methods he pleased, in order to recover rebellious, guilty, stubborn sinners to himself.

That he might take what methods he pleased, I say; for he knew, from the days of eternity, how mankind would be disposed to treat him, his Son, and his grace; and he knew, from eternity, what methods he intended to take to reclaim them, and these are the methods which he now pleases to take; and the methods, yea, the only methods, which he actually does take. So that it is the same thing, in effect, to say that by what Christ has done and suffered, a door is opened for the Most High, consistently with his honor, to take, 1. What methods he actually does take; or, 2. What methods he pleases; or, 3. What methods he, from eternity, intended; for all amount to just one and the same thing; for what pleased him from eternity, the same pleases him now; and what pleases him now, that he actually does. The infinite perfection of his nature does not admit of any new apprehension, or alteration of judgment. By his infinite understanding he always had, and has, and will have, a complete view of all things, past, present, and to come, at once. And by his infinite wisdom, and the perfect rectitude of his nature, he unchangeably sees and determines upon that conduct which is right, and fit, and best. For with him "there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning."

Now, that what Christ has done and suffered, was sufficient to open a way for the honorable exercise of his sovereign grace, in recovering sinners to himself, is evident from what has been heretofore observed. And that it was designed for this end, and has, in fact, effectually answered it, is plain from God's conduct in the affair; for otherwise he could not, consistently with his honor, or the honor of his law, use those means to reclaim sinners which he actually does. For all those methods of grace would else be contrary to law, which does not allow the sinner to have any favor shown him, without a sufficient security to the divine honor, as has been before proved. The law, therefore, has been satisfied in this respect, or these favors could not be shown. For heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than the law be disregarded in any one point. It follows, therefore, that not only special and saving grace, but also that all the common favors which mankind in general enjoy, and that all the means of grace which are common to the elect and non-elect, are the effects of Christ's merits. All were purchased

by him; none of these things could have been granted to mankind, but for him. Christ has opened the door, and an infinite sovereign goodness has strewed these common mercies round the world. All those particulars wherein mankind are treated better than the damned in hell, are over and above what mere law would allow of, and therefore are the effects of Christ's merits and gospel grace. And for this, among other reasons, Christ is called the Savior of the world. And hence, also, God is said to be "reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Because, for the present, their punishment is suspended, and they are treated in a way of mercy; are invited to repentance, and have the offers of pardon, and peace, and eternal life made unto them; hence, I say, God is said not to impute their sins unto them; agreeably with that parallel place in Psalm lxxviii. 38, where God is said to forgive the iniquity of his people, because he destroyed them not.

Upon the whole, then, this seems to be the true state of the case; God is through Christ ready to be reconciled to all and every one that will repent and return unto him through Jesus Christ. He sends the news of pardon and peace around a guilty world, and invites every one to come, saying, "He that believeth shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned;" and, on this account, it is said that "he will have all men to be saved," and "is not willing that any should perish;" because he offers salvation to all, and uses arguments to dissuade them from perdition. But, inasmuch as mankind will not hearken, but are obstinately set in their way, therefore he takes state upon himself, and says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;" and a sinful, guilty world are in his hands, and he may use what methods of grace with all, that he pleases. Some he may suffer to take their own way, and run their own ruin, if he pleases; and others he may subdue and recover to himself, by his own all-conquering grace. And, unto a certain number, from eternity, he intended to show this special mercy; and these are said to be given to Christ. (John vi. 37.) And with a special eye to these sheep did he lay down his life, (John x. 15,) his Father intending, and he intending, that they, in spite of all opposition, should be brought to eternal life at last; and hence the elect do always obtain. (Rom. xi. 7, compared with John vi. 37.) And here we may learn how to understand those places of Scripture which seem to limit Christ's undertaking to a certain number. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; because he shall save his people from their sins." "He is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body." "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for

it." "He hath purchased his church with his own blood." "I lay down my life for the sheep." There were a certain number which the Father and Son, from all eternity, designed for vessels of mercy, to bring to glory. With a view to these, it was promised in the covenant of redemption that Christ should "see of the travail of his soul." And Christ says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (See, also, Tit. ii. 14. Rev. v. 9, 10. Eph. i. 4—6.)

Thus Christ's merits are sufficient for all the world, and the door of mercy is opened wide enough for all the world; and God, the supreme Governor, has proclaimed himself reconcilable to all the world, if they will believe and repent. And if they will not believe and repent, he is at liberty to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and to show compassion to whom he will show compassion; according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace. He sits Sovereign, and a rebellious, guilty world are in his hands, and at his disposal; and the thing that seems good in his sight, that he will do; and it is infinitely fit, right, and best he should; that the pride of all flesh may be brought low, and the Lord alone be exalted forever. And as this view of things seems exactly to harmonize with the whole tenor of the gospel in general, and to agree with the various particular representations of our redemption by Christ; and to reconcile those texts which seem to speak of a universal redemption with those which seem to speak of a particular redemption, so it will naturally suggest an easy answer to any objections which may be made against it.

Obj. 1. If Christ has suffered the penalty of the law, not only for the elect, but also for the non-elect, how can it be just that they themselves should be made to suffer it over again forever in hell?

Ans. Because Christ did not die with a design to release them from their deserved punishment, but only upon condition of faith; and so they have no right to the release, but upon that condition. It is as just, therefore, they should be punished, as if Christ had never died, since they continue obstinate to the last; and it is just, too, they should have an aggravated damnation, for refusing to return to God, despising the offers of mercy, and neglecting so great salvation. (John iii. 16—19.)

Obj. 2. If Christ obeyed the preceptive part of the law, not only for the elect, but also for the non-elect, why are not all brought to eternal life, since eternal life is by law promised to perfect obedience?

Ans. Because Christ did not purchase eternal life for them, but upon the condition of faith. But they would not come to Christ, that they might have life; and therefore they justly perish. (John iii. 16—19.)

Obj. 3. But for what purpose did Christ die for those who were in hell a long time before his death?

Ans. And to what purpose did he die for those who were in heaven a long time before his death? The truth is, that when Christ laid down his life a ransom for all, he only accomplished what he undertook at the beginning. Christ actually interposed as Mediator immediately upon the fall of man, and undertook to secure the divine honor, by obeying and suffering in the room of a guilty world; and therefore, through him, God did offer mercy to Cain as well as to Abel, and show common favors to the world in general, as well as grant special grace to the elect; and that before his death, as well as since. Surely none will deny that all the favors which mankind did enjoy prior to Christ's death, were by virtue of his undertaking to be Mediator, and engaging to secure the divine honor; for, upon any other footing, the Governor of the world could not have granted such favors consistently with his honor.

Obj. 4. But if Christ died for all, then he died in vain, since all are not saved.

Ans. The next and immediate end of Christ's death was to answer the ends of moral government, and so secure the honor of the moral Governor, and open a way in which he might honorably declare himself reconcilable to a guilty world upon their returning through Christ, and use means to reclaim them; but this end Christ did obtain; and so did not die in vain. (John iii. 16. Rom. iii. 24—26.) And the supreme Governor of the world will now, through Christ, accomplish all the designs of his heart, to the everlasting honor of his great name.

Obj. 5. But why would God have a door opened, that he might, consistently with his honor, offer to be reconciled to all that will return to him through Christ, when he knew that the non-elect would never return? And why would he have a door opened that he might use means with them, when he knew all would be in vain, unless he himself recovered them by his all-conquering grace, which yet he never designed to do?

Ans. God designed to put an apostate world into a new state of probation. Mankind were in a state of probation in

Adam, their public head, and we all sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. But God designed to try the posterity of Adam anew, and see whether they would be sorry for their apostsay, or choose to continue in their rebellion. He would tender mercy, and offer to be reconciled, and call them to return, and use arguments and motives, and promise, and threaten, and try, and see what they would do. He knew mankind would be ready to deny their apostasy, and plead that they were not enemies to God, and think themselves very good natured, and would take it exceedingly hard not to be believed; therefore he determined to try them, and see what they would do, and make public declaration through the world, that, finally, he would judge every man according to his works, and deal with him according to his conduct. And, in the mean time, that his honor might be secured, he appoints his Son to be Mediator; and so, through him, proclaims the news of pardon and peace, and enters upon the use of means; and now, if you ask me, "Why does he do all this, when he knows it will be in vain, as to the non-elect, who will never come to repentance," —

I answer, His knowing that all will, in the event, prove ineffectual to bring them to repentance, is no objection against his using the means he does; for God does not make his foreknowledge of events the rule of his conduct, but the reason and fitness of things. You may as well inquire, "Why did God raise up Noah to be a preacher of righteousness to the old world, for the space of a hundred and twenty years, when he knew they would never come to repentance? And why did he send all his servants, the prophets, to the children of Israel, rising early and sending; and, by them, command and call, entreat and expostulate, promise and threaten, and say, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I delight not in the death of a sinner: turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die!' when he knew they would never come to repentance? And why did he afterwards send his Son to the same obstinate people, when he knew they would be so far from hearkening, as that they would rather put him to death?" Now, if you ask me why the great Governor of the world uses such means with the non-elect, and shows so much goodness, patience, forbearance, and long suffering, instead of sending all immediately to deserved destruction, I answer, It is to try them, and to show that he is "the Lord God, gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and abundant in goodness." It is fit that creatures in a state of probation should be tried, and he loves to act like himself; and he means, in and by his conduct, to do both at once; and after

obstinate sinners have long abused that goodness and forbearance, which should have led them to repentance; and have, "after their own hard and impenitent hearts, been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath," the righteousness of God's judgment, in their eternal destruction, will be more manifest. And what if God was determined not to reclaim rebels, voluntarily so obstinate, by his all-conquering grace, but let them take their course, seeing they were so set in their way? What then? Was he not at liberty? Was he bound to save them all by an exertion of his omnipotence? Might he not have mercy on whom he would? And after such long suffering, might he not show his wrath, and make his power known in the eternal destruction of those who so justly deserved it? God's last end, no doubt, is to manifest his perfections; and in and by his whole conduct towards a fallen world, they will all be most illustriously displayed.

Obj. 6. But considering that the non-elect are, after all, under an absolute impossibility to believe and repent, convert and be saved, and considering that all common mercies and means of grace will only render them the more inexcusable in the end, and so aggravate their guilt and damnation; therefore, all things considered, what seeming good they enjoy in this world, is not of the nature of a mercy; it would be better for them to be without it. Sodom and Gomorrah will be better of it in the day of judgment, than Chorazin and Bethsaida;* and therefore there is no need to suppose that any thing which the non-elect enjoy in this world, is the effect of Christ's merits, but only of divine sovereignty.

Ans. What do you mean by being under an absolute impossibility to believe and repent, convert and be saved? Using words without determinate ideas, is one principal thing which bewilders the world about matters of religion. Now, in plain English, all things are ready, and they are invited to come; and there is nothing in the way of their being saved, but, they are not sorry for their apostasy from God, nor will be brought to it by all the means God uses with them. They have not a mind to return to God, nor will they be persuaded by all the most powerful arguments that can be used; they are

* It may be proper just to hint the gross absurdities implied in this objection. If the non-elect were under an absolute (that is, not only a moral, but natural) impossibility to turn to God, they would not be proper subjects to use any means with. And if their common favors and means of grace were not of the nature of mercies, they could not aggravate their guilt; and if it was not their own fault that they did not repent under the enjoyment of means, they would not be to blame, nor deserve to be punished for not repenting. Men stumble into such absurdities by using words without determinate ideas.

voluntary enemies to God, and will not be reconciled, unless by an almighty power and all-conquering grace, which God is not obliged to give, and they are infinitely unworthy of; and without which they might return, were they but of such a temper as they ought to be. They are under no inability but what consists in and results from their want of a good temper of mind, and their voluntary obstinacy. Sin has no power over men, but as they are inclined to it; and the inclinations of the heart are always voluntary and unforced. Men love to be inclined as they are; for otherwise their inclinations would be so far from having any power over them, that they would even cease to be. Now, certainly the bringing up of the children of Israel out of Egypt was of the nature of a mercy, and a great mercy too indeed it was, notwithstanding that, through their unbelief and perverseness, they never got to Canaan. The thing, in itself, was as great a mercy to the body of that generation, as it was to Caleb and Joshua; and their bad temper and bad conduct, which prevented their ever coming to the promised land, did not alter the nature of the thing at all, nor lessen their obligations to gratitude to God, their mighty Deliverer. And yet, all things considered, it had been better for them to have died in their Egyptian bondage, than to have had their carcasses fall in the wilderness, in such an awful manner. And besides, it is evident that the Scriptures do look upon the common favors, and means of grace, which the non-elect enjoy, under the notion of mercies; and, which otherwise could not be, on this very ground their guilt is aggravated, and they rendered inexcusable, and worthy of a more sore punishment in the world to come. (John iii. 16—19; xv. 22, 24. Rom. ii. 4, 5. Heb. ii. 2, 3.) And if they are of the nature of mercies, then they are the effects of Christ's merits, as has been already proved.

And hence, by the way, we may see the reason why the love and goodness of God, in bringing up the children of Israel out of Egypt, is so mightily set forth in the Old Testament, notwithstanding the body of that generation perished in the wilderness; and why the love and goodness of God, in giving his Son to die for the world, is so mightily set forth in the New Testament, notwithstanding multitudes of mankind perish forever; namely, it was the Israelites' own fault that they perished in the wilderness; and so it is sinners' own fault that they perish forever. (John iii. 19; v. 40.) And did they feel it at heart, it would effectually stop their mouths; for this is an undoubted maxim, that the kindnesses of God to a rebellious, perverse world are not, in themselves, any the less

mercies because mankind abuse them to their greater ruin. The kindnesses are, in themselves, the same, whether we make a good improvement of them or no. They are just the same, and so just as great, let our conduct be what it will. It was a great mercy to the Israelites to be delivered out of Egypt; it was a wonderful expression of divine goodness; and hence it is said, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt;" and a like expression we have in Deut. x. 18 — "God loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment." And on the same ground it is said, "God so loved the world," etc., because the gift of Christ to die for the world was an infinite expression of divine goodness; and if mankind do generally abuse this goodness, as the Israelites generally did all God's kindnesses to them, yet still the goodness itself is just the same. A dreadful thing, therefore, it is for the non-elect; even as aggravated a piece of wickedness in them as it would be in any body else, to tread under foot the blood of the Son of God, and make light of all the offers of mercy, and neglect so great salvation. And this, above all other things, will be their condemnation in the coming world. Never are the Jews at all excused, any where in the New Testament, in their slighting the offers of mercy by Christ, on this account, that they were not of the elect. And, indeed, the offers were sincere, and it was entirely their own fault that they did not accept, and they deserved to be treated accordingly. (Matt. xxii. 1, 7.)

Obj. 7. But if God so loved the world, the whole world, as to give his only-begotten Son to die for them, in the sense explained, why does he not go through, and perfect the work, and save the whole world, according to that in Rom. viii. 32? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

Ans. 1. And why did not the king, in Matt. xxii., who had made a marriage for his son, and sent his servants to say to them that were bidden, "I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage;" why did not the king, I say, when they refused, compel them to come in? Since he had done so much, why did he not go through and finish the work? And this is directly to the point in hand, because this parable is designed to represent that full provision which is made for the salvation of sinners by the death of Christ; and it proves that the objection has no force in it. But further: —

2. Take your Bible, and read from the 28th verse to the end of the 8th chapter of Romans, and you will see what the

apostle's design is, through his whole discourse. "We know," says he, "that all things work together for good to them that love God; to them who are called according to his purpose." But how do we know it? Why, because God is fully determined to bring them to glory at last. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and them he justified, and them he glorified. And God was so fully determined to bring them to glory, and so much engaged in the thing, that he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; that is, *us*, who love God, and are his elect people"—for it is of these, and these only, that he here is speaking. "And since he was so much engaged as to do this, we may depend upon it that he will also freely give us all things; that is, *us*, who love God, and are his elect people. So that never any thing shall hinder our being finally brought to glory, or separate us from the love of God; neither tribulation, nor persecution, nor distress, nor any thing else." So that this is the apostle's argument—Since God was so much engaged to bring them to glory who loved God, and were his elect people, as that he had given his own Son to die for that end, they, therefore, might have the strongest assurance that he would do every thing else which would be needful effectually to bring it about.*

But God never designed to bring the non-elect to glory, when he gave his Son to die for the world. He designed to declare himself reconcilable to them through Christ; to offer mercy; to invite them, in common with others, to return; and to assure all that he that believeth shall be saved; and to use means with them more or less, according to his pleasure; but finally, they being obstinate, he designed to leave them to themselves, to take their own course, and, in the end, to deal with them according to their deserts. (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38, and xxii. 1—7.) And this being the case, the objection from the apostle's words is evidently groundless.

As to the opinion of the Arminians, that God equally designed salvation for all men, purposing to offer salvation to

* If we leave God's design out of the apostle's argument, I cannot see that his reasoning would be conclusive, any more than a like argument would have been conclusive, if we should suppose Moses to have used it with the Israelites at the side of the Red Sea. "Since God has now brought you all out of Egypt, and thus divided the Red Sea before you, and drowned your enemies, therefore he will now, without fail, bring you all to the promised land;" which reasoning would not have been conclusive; for the body of that generation died in the wilderness, and that in a very awful manner, notwithstanding this glorious deliverance.

all, and use means with all, and leave all to their own free will, and save those, and those only, who, of their own accord, will become good men; as for this opinion, I say, I think they never learnt it from the Bible; but rather, they seem to have been led into it from a notion that mankind are so good natured that all might, and that at least some actually would, under the enjoyment of the common means of grace, become good men of their own accord, that is, without any such thing as special grace. Convince them that this is an error, and they will soon give up their scheme, and acknowledge their need of sovereign grace, and see the reasonableness and truth of the doctrine of election. Or rather, I may say, convince them, first of all, what God is, and what the law is, and what the nature of true religion is, that they may know what conversion means, and what it means to be a good man, and there will be no difficulty then to convince them of the depravity of mankind; for what leads them to think it so easy a thing to become a good man, and that men may be brought to it merely by the force of moral suasion, is, their wrong idea of the nature of true religion. If religion be what they suppose. then, no doubt, any body may easily become good; for corrupt nature can bear with such a religion. But if religion, or a conformity to God's law, be what I have endeavored to prove it to be in the former Discourse, then, no doubt, mankind are naturally diametrically opposite thereto in the temper of their minds; even all mankind, Arminians as well as others; and all do, or might, know it, if they would seriously and honestly weigh the matter; for it is plain fact. The Arminians are wont mightily to cry up works, and plead for the moral law, as though they were great friends to it; but if their mistakes about the moral law might once be rectified, and they be brought really and heartily to approve it, as holy, just, and good, one principal source of all their errors would be dried up; and particularly their wrong notions about election and universal redemption.

"But where was there any love," — will the objector say, — "in God's giving his Son to die for the non-elect; or sincerity in his offering them mercy, if he never designed to bring them to glory, but from eternity intended to leave them to perish in their sins?"

And where was there any love, I answer, in God's bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, or sincerity in his offering to bring them to Canaan, if he never designed eventually to bring them there; but, from eternity, intended to leave them to murmur and rebel, and to have their carcasses fall in the wilderness?

The solution in both cases is the same, and is plainly this: As it was the Israelites' own fault that they did not come to Canaan at last, so it is the sinner's own fault that he finally falls short of glory, However, the Israelites were often in a rage, and ready to say, "The Lord hath brought us into the wilderness to kill us here;" and they murmured against God, and against Moses, for which they were struck dead by hundreds and thousands: and just so sinners do; and the same punishment do they deserve. But had the Israelites felt at heart that it was their own voluntary wickedness which was the sole cause of their ruin, and did sinners feel it at heart too, there would be no murmuring in one case or the other; but every mouth would be stopped. But I have spoken to this before.

To conclude: If this representation of things which I have given be according to truth, hence, then, we may learn these two things, which, indeed, were what I had principally in view in dwelling so long upon this subject, and laboring to answer objections; I say, we may learn, first, that any poor sinner, all the world over, who hears the gospel and believes it, has sufficient grounds of encouragement, from the freeness of God's grace, and the sufficiency of Christ, and the universal calls of the gospel, to venture his eternal all in this way of salvation, and may safely return to God through Christ, in hopes of acceptance; and that without any particular revelation that he is elected, or that Christ died for him in particular. "Any may come, the vilest and the worst; and therefore I may come." And therefore such a particular revelation is perfectly needless: nor could it do any good; for the truth of the gospel may be depended upon; but the truth of such a particular revelation cannot. Secondly, that any poor, sinful, guilty, broken-hearted backslider, who groans under the burden of sin as the greatest evil, and longs to have the power of sin taken down, and his corruptions slain, and himself thoroughly subdued to God, may look up to the infinite free grace of God through Jesus Christ, and pray, "Lord, take away this heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh. Turn me, and I shall be turned. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. O, create in me a clean heart, and renew in me a right spirit, and restore to me the joy of thy salvation! To thy sovereign grace and self-moving goodness I apply myself, through Jesus Christ. God be merciful to me, a sinner;" and that whether he knows himself to be a child of God, or no; and so whether he knows that he belongs to the number of the elect, or not. Nor does he need any particular revelation that Christ

died for him in particular, or that he is elected, or that he is beloved of God: nor would these things do any good to clear up his warrant to come for mercy; because God may, through Christ, give his Holy Spirit to any that ask him. All who are athirst are invited to come and take of the waters of life freely. "Any may come; and therefore I may come, although the vilest creature in the world." And I appeal to all the generation of God's children, whether this has not been their way of coming to God through Christ, ever since the day they first came to know the Lord. Sure I am, this is the Scripture way. God has sent out a proclamation through a sinful, guilty world, inviting all to come to him, through Jesus Christ, for all things; and given many encouragements, by representing how free his grace is, how sufficient Christ is, and how faithful his promises, and that whosoever will, may come, etc. But nowhere in all the Bible has he revealed it that such and such in particular, by name, among mankind, are elected; and that for these individuals Christ died in particular, by way of encouragement to those particular persons, in order to let them know that they might safely trust in Christ, and come to God through him. But then must we be right, when we understand the gospel and believe it, and, upon the very encouragements which God has given, are imboldened to return, in hopes of acceptance: and this must be agreeable to God's will; and to this must the influences of the true spirit tend. But to venture to return and look to God for mercy, merely upon any other ground, is anti-scriptural; and whatsoever spirit influences thereunto cannot, therefore, be from God.

And thus we see how the door of life is opened by Christ, our great Mediator and High Priest. And hence Christ calls himself "the door." "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." And hence, also, he calls himself "the way to the Father." "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me;" "for through him, we both have an access, by one spirit, unto the Father;" and also, through him, God is reconciling the world to himself, sending ambassadors, and beseeching them to be reconciled. (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) Which leads me to the next thing proposed.

SECTION VI.

A VIEW OF THE METHODS OF DIVINE GRACE WITH MANKIND, FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD.

IV. I AM to show what methods the great Governor of the world has entered upon, in order to put in execution those designs of mercy which he had in view when he contrived to open this door, in such a wonderful and glorious manner, by the interposition of his own dear Son.

The most high God is conscious of his own infinite excellence; his right to, and authority over, the children of men; he sees mankind as being under infinite obligations to love and obey him, and that the least defect is an infinite evil. He judges the law to be holy, just, and good; and mankind wholly to blame for their non-conformity thereto, and worthy to be dealt with according to it. He knows their contrariety to him, to his law, and to his gospel. He sees all these things as they really are. His infinite wisdom sees how it is fit for such a one as he is, now, through a Mediator, to conduct towards such a world as this is. He sees what conduct is most becoming, and, all things considered, most meet and suitable; and to this conduct the perfect rectitude of his nature prompts and inclines him. Upon the whole, he necessarily and freely determines to act like himself; that is, like an absolute sovereign, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. This was his determination from eternity; this is his determination in time; and according to this rule he actually proceeds, in all his methods with a sinful, guilty, obstinate world; "working all things according to the counsel of his own will;" sovereignly, and yet wisely; holily and justly, and yet as the Lord God gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth. As is his nature, such is his conduct; and hence his conduct exhibits to us the very image of his heart. Thus it is in the impetration, and thus it is in the application of our redemption, and in all the methods he takes with a guilty world in general. And hence, all his ways are calculated to exalt God, and humble the sinner; to honor the law, and discountenance sin; to exclude boasting, and to glorify grace; as we shall more fully see in what follows.

1. As being the supreme Lord and sovereign Ruler of the whole world, he does, through Jesus Christ, the great Mediator, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, by whom his honor has been secured; he does, I say, through him, grant,

and, by an act of grace, confirm to the world of mankind, a general reprieve from that utter ruin which was threatened by the law, and to which an apostate world were exposed. Total destruction was threatened in case of disobedience. "In dying thou shalt die;" that is, thou shalt die with a witness; thy ruin shall be complete. And now nothing could be expected but a dreadful doom, and to be sealed down under everlasting despair. But, instead of this, the great God dooms the tempter, and threatens utter ruin to his new-erected kingdom. "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed; and thy head shall be bruised." But guilty man is reprieved from a total ruin, and allowed a space for repentance. And the world has now stood almost six thousand years, reprieved by the tender mercy of God, through Jesus Christ.

Indeed, certain evils were denounced by the Majesty of heaven, as standing monuments of his displeasure, always to attend a guilty race while in this world. Peculiar sorrows were appointed to women, and hard labor and toil to men, and sickness and pain to both, till death should put an end to their reprieve and to their space for repentance. And when our day to die shall come, we are not to know; we lie at mercy, and God acts sovereignly; so long as he pleases, so long shall we be reprieved, and no longer. And thus, while tender mercy appears in the general reprieve, the holiness, and justice, and sovereignty of God appear in the manner of it. God is exalted; a guilty world lies at his mercy; they are, in a sense, continually under his rod, and every moment liable to drop into an eternal hell. They are held up in his hand; hell gapes to receive them, and now he lets one fall, and then another; now this, and then that, just as it seems good in his sight. Surely, this is awful! Surely, mankind are in very humbling circumstances, and in circumstances wonderfully calculated to awaken them to repent and pray to God, if, peradventure, their wickedness may be forgiven.

When the general reprieve, granted to this lower world, shall come to a period, then will the great Judge of the world proceed, with all who shall be found impenitent, according to law, without any mixture of mercy. The present reprieve granted as a space for repentance, is not of the law, but of mere grace through Jesus Christ. Now grace takes place, and patience, forbearance, and long-suffering, sit on the throne; but then law shall take place, and strict justice reign. The mediation of Christ, at present, secures the honor of law and justice, and opens the door for grace; but then the day of grace will be at an end. A guilty world shall no longer be treated in a way of

mercy, and favored on Christ's account; but be proceeded against in flaming fire and terrible vengeance, and every one be punished according to his deserts. How long the day of God's patience with a guilty world is to last, we know not. A guilty world lies at his mercy, and may be all summoned to the bar when he pleases. Surely this is awful and awakening! but this is the state in which God means to show all long-suffering, and to exercise and display the infinite patience of his nature; and surely this should lead us to repentance! Thus, this is one step in a way of mercy, which God, in his infinite grace through Jesus Christ, has taken with a guilty world. And what is the improvement which mankind are disposed to make of it? Why, "because sentence against their evil works is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

2. Another favor granted to mankind in general by the great Governor of the world, through Jesus Christ, is a competency of the good things of this life for their comfortable support, while under this reprieve and in this new state of probation. By law, mankind, for their apostasy, stood disinherited of every good thing, doomed to a complete destruction, (Gen. ii. 17;) but now, through a Mediator, they are dealt with in a way of mercy. It is true, in token of the divine displeasure, God turned man out of paradise, and cursed the ground, and subjected man to hard labor, (Gen. iii.;) but then, at the same time, for Christ's sake, a general grant of many good things is made to a guilty world. They are allowed to live on God's earth; breathe in his air; see by the light of his sun; to eat of the herb of the field, and to eat bread in the sweat of their face; to clothe themselves with the skins of slain beasts. (Gen. iii.) They are allowed summer and winter; seed-time and harvest; and the beasts of the field are given to them. (Gen. viii. 22, and ix. 1—3.) Yea, it has been God's way abundantly to do good to a guilty world; "to send rain, and grant fruitful seasons, and fill the hearts of men with food and gladness." So that, considering we are an apostate, guilty world, we may well say, with the Psalmist, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord;" and this, notwithstanding all the calamities which overspread the whole earth; for we are now to attribute every thing in our circumstances, whereby we are better of it than the damned in hell are, to the mere mercy and goodness of God, through Jesus Christ. Thus God reprieves a guilty world, and grants them food and raiment, to the intent that they may have a space for repentance. Surely now it is vile, infinitely vile, to despise the riches of his good-

ness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, and not to take it in and understand it, that the goodness of God should lead us to repentance. And it is great madness, after our hard and impenitent hearts, to go on in our rebellion, and treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. (Rom. ii. 4, 5.) And yet this is the general temper, and common way of the world.

3. Another common favor granted to mankind, upon Christ's account, is, a general resurrection from the dead, (1 Cor. xv. 21,) to the intent that all who believe, repent, and return to God through Jesus Christ, may be completely happy in soul and body forever. It is certain the law threatened death, but made no provision for a resurrection; and if the law had been executed, and no Mediator provided, we have no reason to think there ever would have been any resurrection. And I cannot see why a general resurrection may not be considered under the notion of a mercy in itself, notwithstanding many, by their final impenitence, lay a foundation for their being raised up to everlasting shame and confusion. I am ready to think that to be raised from the dead must surely be of the nature of a mercy, and so be the effect of Christ's merits; but the particular manner in which the wicked shall be raised, may nevertheless be considered as a punishment, and so be the effect of their sin and final impenitence. Christ's merit lays the foundation for a general resurrection; and all who believe and repent shall be raised up to glory and complete blessedness; and all who die in their sins shall be raised up to shame and complete misery.

4. There are also divers other things granted to mankind in general, which seem pretty evidently to be of the nature of mercies, and so to be owing to the interposition and merits of our glorious Mediator, Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and a sinful, guilty world; to whose merits and mediation, every thing which mankind enjoy, which is of the nature of a mercy, is to be attributed; divers things, I say, whereby much is done towards putting such an apostate race of beings into a capacity of comfortably living together in this world, while they are in their new state of probation; divers things in our temper, which seem originally to take their rise very much from that temperament of body and animal constitution which God, our Former, gives us; there is a natural good humor, a natural compassion, a natural modesty, and natural affection. These things, in a greater or less degree, we find to be natural to men, and to have a very great influence to keep under and restrain their corruptions, and to incline and prompt to many actions materially good, and greatly for the comfort of human

society and benefit of mankind in general. These things do evidently keep mankind from abundance of wickedness, which otherwise they would commit; they have a heart for a thousand abominations, but these things restrain them,: and these things do evidently put mankind on to a thousand actions materially good, which otherwise they would never do: they have a heart bad enough to neglect them, but these things excite them to do them. Were it not for these and other restraints, I see not why mankind should not be as bad in this world as they will be in the next. Wicked men have no wickedness infused into them at death; and therefore they have no other nature, no other principle of sin in their hearts, after they are dead, than they had before; but, as soon as they are dead, they are evidently, no doubt, as universally contrary to God and all that is good, as the devils themselves. As soon as ever those things which now restrain them are all removed, their true temper appears without any disguise. It is, no doubt, therefore, a great mercy for mankind to be thus restrained. They enjoy more comfort, they commit less sin, they merit less punishment, they are under better advantages to live together, to enjoy the means of grace, and attend to the offers of mercy by Jesus Christ, "who is the Savior of all men, but especially of them that believe."

Thus the great God, instead of executing the sentence of the law in all its severity upon a guilty world, does, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, grant to mankind in general these common favors. They are reprieved from a total ruin; have a comfortable maintenance in this world allowed them; a general resurrection is decreed; several natural endowments are granted, to restrain from bad actions, and to prompt to actions materially good. And hereby the Governor of the world has laid the foundation, and prepared the way to go on to use the methods he designed, more immediately tending to reclaim and recover a sinful, guilty world to himself; for now mankind are put into a sort of capacity of being treated with in such a way.

These things ought deeply to affect mankind. We lie under many calamities, and yet enjoy many mercies in this our natural state of guilt and condemnation; all which ought to be improved to awaken, convince, and humble us, and lead us to repent, and cry to God for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace, and predispose us cordially to receive and embrace that revelation, which God has made in his word, of our ruin, and the way of our recovery.

But, through the great blindness and corruption of mankind,

these things have had a very contrary effect. Mankind, finding themselves thus reprieved, and thus kindly treated by God, have many of them hereby been led to think they are in pretty good standing; not by nature children of wrath, and under condemnation. The devil told Eve they should not surely die; so, many are now ready to think that the old law, which threatened the least sin with death, is repealed; and that we are now born into the world free from any guilt. And mankind, finding themselves endowed with natural modesty, good-humor, compassion, etc., are ready to dream that they are born into the world without any sinful corruption of nature, but rather as holy as Adam in innocence; and hence are very insensible of any need of such a Redeemer and Sanctifier as are provided. And so they are predisposed to dislike that revelation which God has made in his word concerning our ruin and the way of our recovery. And hence mankind are strongly bent to misunderstand, and misinterpret, and disbelieve the law and the gospel. And besides, by this goodness and forbearance of God, men are imboldened in sin, as if it were not a very great evil, nor God very much set against it. They begin to think God is all made up of mercy, and that they are in no great danger. And so, after their hard and impenitent hearts, they go on to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Thus God and his goodness are abused by this vile, wicked race of apostate, rebellious creatures. And, indeed, all this is no more than was expected; great reason, therefore, was there for him so effectually to secure his own honor, and the honor of his holy law, by the interposition of his own dear Son as Mediator. And now, let mankind be ever so bad, he can go on with his methods of mercy, to accomplish all his designs of grace; and all consistently with the honor of his holiness and justice, law and government, and sacred authority.

5. Mankind being naturally very insensible of their sinful, guilty, ruined state; and totally ignorant of, and unable to find out, any way of obtaining the divine favor, and wholly averse, in the temper of their hearts, to a genuine return to God; therefore God, of his infinite grace through Jesus Christ, has, in various ways and divers manners, according to the good pleasure of his will, by immediate revelation from heaven, set before mankind their ruin, and the way of their recovery; offered many arguments, motives, and encouragements, to persuade them to return, and denounced terrible threatenings to deter them from going on in their rebellion, and direct them, in the use of certain means of grace, to seek for the inward influence

of the Holy Spirit, to awaken and convince, to humble and convert, and effectually recover them to God through the great Mediator.

6. And, because the Most High sees that through the very bad temper of mankind, this external revelation, although most excellently adapted thereto, yet if left to themselves, would finally prove altogether ineffectual to recover any of mankind; yea, so very far from it, that mankind would not so much as rightly understand or believe it, or seriously take matters into consideration, but would misunderstand and pervert it, and finally universally disbelieve and renounce and forget it, and not suffer it to have any room in the world; therefore he has, from the beginning of the world, and does still, and will to the end of the world, by the inward influences of his Spirit, and by the outward dispensations of his providence, carry on, according to his sovereign pleasure, the work of his grace; accomplish his eternal purposes of mercy; recover sinners to himself; maintain true religion in the world; preserve his church; gather in all the elect; display all his glorious perfections in his dealings with mankind, and get to himself a great name in the end; exhibiting in his whole conduct, from first to last, the most lively image of himself.

In these two last particulars we have a general account of those methods which God does take with a sinful, guilty race, more immediately tending to their recovery, which we may see exemplified in his dealings with mankind, from the beginning.

1. In the earliest ages of the world, immediately after the fall, he began to enter upon these methods of grace; he taught our first parents their ruin, and the way of their recovery by the promised seed; and instituted sacrifices to typify the great atonement, which should afterwards be made for the sins of the world. And what he taught our first parents, they taught their children; and hence Cain and Abel, and after generations, learnt to worship God by sacrifice. (Gen. iv. 3—8.) Now Adam lived until Methuselah was two hundred and forty-six years old, and Methuselah lived until Shem was a hundred years old, and Shem lived until the time of Abraham and Isaac; yea, till Isaac was fifty years old; so that the news of Adam's fall, of the ruin of mankind, and of salvation by the seed of the woman, might easily have been handed down by tradition from one to another, and all mankind might have been fully acquainted with these things. And besides these external teachings and means of grace, God granted the inward influences of his Spirit, whereby some were effectually recovered to God, of whom were Abel, Enoch, and Noah, who were also signalized by

divine Providence. (Gen. iv. 4; v. 22; vi. 9, compared with Heb. xi. 4—7.)

But while God thus early began to use methods for the recovery of a sinful, guilty world to himself, they began early to show their aversion to God, and unwillingness to return. Cain seems, by the sacrifice which he offered, quite insensible that he was a fallen creature, and that he needed an atonement for sin. He brought only of the fruit of the ground for a thank-offering, (like the Pharisee, in Luke xviii., whose prayer consisted only in thanksgiving, without any faith or repentance,) but brought none of the flock for a sin-offering, (Gen. iv.,) although "without shedding of blood there could be no remission." He was a formal, impenitent hypocrite, nor would God accept him; but Abel found favor in the sight of the Lord by faith. (Heb. xi. 4.) And therefore Cain was angry at God, and enraged at his brother, and murdered him, and cast off all religion, and gave himself up to serve his lusts; yea, he forsook the visible church of God, and departed, and went into the land of Nod. And thus he, and afterwards his posterity after him, join to renounce true religion, and openly distinguish themselves from God's visible people on earth. (Gen. iv. 16.) And it seems good to the supreme Governor of the world even to let them all take their way, and act their own nature.

For a while true religion was maintained in the family of Seth, (Gen. iv. 26;) and to put honor upon the practice thereof, Enoch was translated to heaven. (Gen. v. 24.) But yet, in process of time, they degenerated and became so much like the rest of the world, like the posterity of Cain, that they were disposed to relish their company, and marry their daughters. (Gen. vi. 2.) And then presently the contagion spread; "the wickedness of mankind in general was great upon the earth." "All flesh corrupted their ways, and the earth was filled with violence." And now the great Governor of the world raises up Noah, and makes him a preacher of righteousness; and Noah preaches, and God waits a hundred and twenty years; but mankind will not be reformed, and therefore God gives over that generation, and drowns the world by a universal deluge. First, mankind break through all the restraints lying upon them, discover the very temper of their hearts, publicly show their aversion to God, their disregard of his grace, their utter unwillingness to return, and their perverse propensity to go on in their rebellion. Secondly, God, through the Mediator, uses means to reclaim them, and shows all long-suffering, and so tries them. Thirdly, they remaining obstinate, trampling under foot his authority, and despising his goodness, he, at last, in a

most public manner, executes righteous vengeance upon them. He displays his infinite goodness and patience in waiting so long, and using so many means for their recovery; he displays his sovereignty in waiting but just so long, and in taking but just so much pains with them; he displays his holiness, justice, and truth, in bringing that destruction upon them at the very time before threatened; and, in the whole, he displays his infinite wisdom; his whole conduct being excellently well calculated to make all succeeding generations know that he is the Lord, and suited to maintain the honor of his holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, of his law and government, and sacred authority. And thus we see what methods God took with the old world, together with the result of all. And now,—

2. We come to take a brief view of his ways with mankind since the flood, and of their carriage towards him. There is no doubt but that Noah had received by tradition and well understood the fall of Adam, the ruin of mankind, the way of recovery by the seed of the woman, the institution, end, and design of sacrifices. And there is no doubt but that he faithfully instructed his children in what he himself knew; and they might have taught their children, and they the generation following, and so all the world might have known the way of salvation through a Mediator. And it is certain that this would have been the case, had mankind been in a disposition sufficiently to have prized the knowledge of these things. But "when they knew God," by parental instruction, "they did not glorify him as God; neither were they thankful" for these advantages which infinite goodness had granted them, "but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." And they soon lost the knowledge of true religion, and fell off to idolatry, and "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and to four-footed beasts, and creeping things. For they did not like to retain God in their knowledge." And when mankind, presently after the flood, did thus publicly discover the temper of their hearts, by renouncing the true God and true religion, and falling away to idolatry and superstition, and all manner of wickedness; I say, when mankind, notwithstanding the late awful warning they had had by the universal deluge, did thus quickly show themselves so entirely disposed to their sinful and rebellious courses; "for this cause God gave them up;" even suffered them to take their own way, and run their own ruin. The whole earth might all have been God's people, and his visible family, but they would not; they might all have retained the knowledge of the true God and of the way

to life, but they did not like to, and God was not obliged to make them, and therefore he even let them take their own course; and yet took care, in after ages, not to leave himself without witness, but by many wonderful works, to let all the nations of the earth know that he was the Lord. And if any would repent and return, he made provision for their reception as proselytes into the Jewish church. And doubtless here and there one from age to age, by the inward influences of his blessed Spirit, were brought so to do; and the rest were blinded, as is said in a parallel case. (Rom. xi. 7.)

And now the knowledge of the true God, and of true religion, must presently have been lost from off the face of the whole earth, and never have been recovered, and Satan had the most full possession of the whole world to the latest posterity, had not free and sovereign grace interposed in a most wonderful manner, in this dark and awful juncture. But, in this very season, God was pleased, of his own mere goodness and sovereign pleasure, still through the appointed Mediator, by the gracious influences of his Spirit, and by immediate revelations, and by the special dispensations of his providence, to preserve to himself a seed to serve him. He called Abram alone, as it were, from the rest of the world, and blessed him; he made further revelations to him touching the promised seed, and entered into a covenant to be his God, and the God of his children after him. And now, a new world of wonders begins to open to our view, in the divine dispensations towards Abram and his seed. (Gen. xii., etc.)

Note. — While God was doing these things with Abraham, the rest of the world grew wicked apace; and therefore God thought fit to give a specimen of the temper of his heart, and let the nations know that he was the Lord, by raining fire and brimstone out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, who were remarkably wicked, and at the same time, delivering righteous Lot. (Gen. x.) A dispensation so remarkable, and never the like before heard of, that no doubt it flew like lightning all the world over, and spread terror and surprise through the guilty nations. However, for all this, they turned not to the Lord. Well, Abraham is circumcised, with all his household, and true religion is taught and maintained in his family, and Isaac his son, and Eliezer his servant, seem to have been savingly wrought upon by divine grace. And God blesses Abraham, and he becomes very great; and God protects him wherever he goes, to the honor of his great name, in the midst of an idolatrous world. Nevertheless, the world, instead of growing wiser and better by all this, which doubtless was heard of and much

wondered at among the nations, they grew worse and worse; yea, wickedness appears openly in Abraham's family itself. Ishmael discovers a bad spirit; he mocks at Isaac. "And he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit." So that he was, in a sort, excommunicated and cast out of God's visible family; and it is not long before true religion is a thing unknown among his numerous posterity. And they who were of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, were now numbered with the heathen. Thus, after this sort, it fared with Cain, the first persecutor; and thus it fares with Ishmael, for the warning of all godless and carnal professors. And yet, from age to age, this same temper has appeared, and yet still does appear, although, perhaps, this sin, from the beginning of the world to this day, has never yet gone unpunished.

Now, it was said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." And with him God renewed the covenant, and to him the promises were repeated, and God blessed him, and he became very great; and he also was under a special divine protection; yet there was a profane Esau in his family, who made so light of the spiritual blessings of Abraham, as, for a mere trifle, to sell his birthright. And he afterwards became a persecutor of his brother Jacob, and his posterity soon lost the knowledge of the true God and of the true religion, and degenerated into a state of heathenism.

Nor can it be attributed to any thing but the free and sovereign grace of God, that Jacob and his seed did not do so too. But so it was; for so it seemed good in the eyes of Him, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whose purpose, according to election, always stands independent of works. (Rom. ix. 11.) I say, so it was, through the power of Him "who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will," that when all the other nations of the earth were suffered to renounce the true God and the true religion, that in Jacob God was known, and his name was great in Israel. Never was there a nation which discovered a stronger propensity to idolatry, and all manner of wickedness, than they. And notwithstanding all the mighty restraints, by God laid upon them, they were almost perpetually breaking through all, and rushing on like the horse into the battle. Neither warnings, nor threatenings, nor the authority of God, nor the tears of their prophets, nor the most terrible judgments, were ever able effectually to restrain that people and turn them to God. And had not God always, by his special grace, kept a remnant for himself, they would have been like Sodom, and like to Gomorrah. (Isa. i. 2, 9. Rom. xi. 2, 7.)

Now, the divine perfections were most illustriously displayed in the divine conduct towards this people, from age to age; and that not only before their faces, but also in the eyes of all the nations round about them. Marvellous things were wrought in Egypt, and wonders at the Red Sea, and forty years in the wilderness, which no doubt did ring through the world, and were enough to have made all the earth know that he was *the* LORD, and, but for their perverse stubbornness, to have brought them all to worship him, and him only; but all this was so far from reclaiming the heathen nations, that it hardly tamed the Israelites themselves. They rebelled at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-Hattaavah, and were perpetually "provoking the Lord to wrath." "When he slew them, then they sought him; and returned and inquired early after God. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." And many a time were they within a hair's breadth of destruction, and would surely have been utterly destroyed, but that he wrought for his great name's sake. (Exod. xxxii. Num. xiv. Ezek. xx.)

So, again, in the days of Joshua, he divided Jordan, and drove out the heathen before them, and gave them their land in possession, and made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents. Yet they afterwards tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies, but turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers; they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. (Psalm lxxviii. 54—58. Judg. ii. 6—20.) And, now, for the space of many years, God, by raising up judges, and by sending prophets, and executing judgments, did labor to reform them; but all in vain; for they quickly turned aside, like a deceitful bow. However, in the mean while, the goodness and patience of God on the one hand, and his holiness and justice on the other, were illustriously displayed by his wonderful works in the midst of the earth, to be sounded out among all nations, that all the earth might know that he was the Lord.

In the days of David and Solomon, God wrought for his great name's sake, and exalted his people, and made Israel honorable in the sight of all nations; yet were they not sincere in his sight; and when outward restraints were afterwards taken off, they soon discovered the hidden temper of their hearts; that they did not care for God or his worship, but liked Dan and Bethel, as well as the temple of Jerusalem. Thus did the ten tribes; nor was their treacherous sister, Judah, more sin-

cere. When a good king reigned, they would pretend to be good; and when a bad king reigned, they stood ready for idols. And now God sent judgment upon them time after time, and sent all his servants, the prophets, saying, "O, do not this abominable thing, which my soul hateth;" but they would not hearken. "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his works, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of God arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, and gave them all into his hand."

However, God was tenderly touched at the public reproach and dishonor to which his great name is exposed, in the eyes of insulting nations all around, who clapped their hands, and stamped with their feet, and rejoiced with all their heart, for what was done to the people called by his name; glorying that their God was no better than the dumb idols, which they served. Wherefore God raised up the prophet Ezekiel, who clears up God's conduct towards his people, in chapters 16th and 18th, and on; and dooms the neighboring nations in the name of God, declaring what judgment should come upon them from the hand of God, for their insults, whereby they should be made to know that he was the Lord; as in the 25th, to chapter 31. And now also Daniel and his companions were by God raised up, that by them his name might become great in the eyes of all nations. And for them he works such deliverances as to constrain the haughty monarchs of the earth to issue out their decrees through all the world, that none should speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego, upon pain of being cut in pieces, and their houses made a dunghill, and that, in all their dominions, men should fear and tremble before the God of Daniel. (Dan. iii. 29; vi. 26.) Surely the infinite wisdom of God appears most wonderfully, in all the astonishing methods which he has taken to make himself known, and to keep up the honor of his great name among such a wicked, God-hating race of beings!

And now, all this while, there was nothing but the infinite goodness, and free and sovereign grace of God, together with his covenant faithfulness, to move him not to cast off and utterly reject his people, and let them be scattered among the heathen, and their name perish from off the earth. It was for his great name's sake that he wrought salvation for them from time to time. (Ezek. xx.) When there was no motive in them, but

every thing to the contrary, then, for his own sake, he undertook to write his law in their hearts, and put it in their inward parts; to be their God, and make them his people, and to remember their iniquities no more against them, and to bring them back to their own land, and plant them, and build them up. (Ezek. xxxvi. 16—34.)

And, however, by the Babylonish captivity, the Jewish people were pretty thoroughly cured of their idolatrous disposition, yet, after their return, and after the godly men of that generation were dead, they soon began to show that they were as averse to God, and the life of religion, as ever. And yet, all these things notwithstanding, God is determined to make one trial more. He had sent one servant after another, and they had been beaten, and stoned, and put to shame, and sent away empty. Now, therefore, he sends his only Son, to see if they will hear him; and behold they say, Come, let us kill him. (Matt. xxi. 33—39.) Wherefore, at last, God determined to cast off that nation, and to go and try the heathen, whom, for a long time, he had suffered to take their own ways.

And now, to his apostles Christ gives commission to go into all the earth, and preach the gospel to every creature; and "he that believeth," says he, "shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." And they run, and preach, and cry, "Repent, and turn from your dumb idols, to serve the living God." And had not they been stopped, they would soon have carried the news all round the world. But Jews and Gentiles combine together, and earth and hell are in arms to defeat the design; nevertheless, as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. And God carried on his work through a sea of blood, and in about three hundred years conquered the Roman empire.

No sooner is this done, but the mystery of iniquity begins to work, and the man of sin to be revealed. The devil and his servants turn their coat, and, under the cloak of religion and good order, establish the kingdom of Satan in a new form; for it is the nature of mankind to hate true religion. And now Antichrist reigns, and scatters the holy people, and wears out the saints of the Most High, for a time, and times, and half a time. In the mean while, the woman flies into the wilderness, the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, until, at last, the witnesses themselves are slain. And now religion is driven even just out of the world, and there had been no hope, but that God awoke as one out of sleep, like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And behold, the spirit of life from God enter into the two witnesses, that is, Luther and Calvin, and other their contemporaries; "and they stood upon their feet, and great

fear fell upon them which saw them." And God put them out of their enemies' reach. And there was a great earthquake, and a tenth part of the city fell. (Rev. ix.) And a glorious day began to dawn.

But now, it is not long before many turn heretics and enthusiasts, and the world rises in arms, and by fire and sword endeavors to demolish the Redeemer's kingdom. However, God wrought for his great name's sake, and has ever since been working, and will go on conquering and to conquer, until all the nations of the earth are brought into subjection to his Son.

Thus we have taken a brief view of the methods which God has taken to recover a sinful, guilty world to himself. The external means we have chiefly dwelt upon; upon the internal, something further shall be added presently: but let us first make a few remarks.

Remark 1. Had not mankind been wholly to blame, they might all of them, from the beginning, have enjoyed the benefit of divine revelation. Nothing secluded them therefrom, but their own bad temper and bad conduct. And had not mankind been wholly to blame, they might all of them have enjoyed the gospel, and had it preached all over the world to this day: nothing has hindered it but their own perverse obstinacy, their hating the light, and hating the truth. Strange it is, therefore, that some men of learning should be so full of charity for the heathen, who thus hate God, despise Christ, and reject the gospel.*

Remark 2. Mankind have manifested the highest degree of aversion to God and true religion from the beginning of the world, and that almost in all possible ways. Hundreds, and thousands, and millions, have they in their rage put to death, and that in the most cruel and barbarous manner. Strange it is, therefore, that so many matters of fact have not, to this day, convinced mankind that they are truly enemies to God.

* But perhaps some will be ready to say, that there may be many honest persons among the heathen, who never heard of the gospel, and never rejected it, who may stand fair for heaven.

Ans. There is a number of such honest sort of persons among Christians, but their natural enmity to God and Christ, and gospel grace, is found to be as great as others; and sometimes publicans and harlots enter into heaven before them. Surely none of them are more honest than the young man in the gospel, nor ever arrived to greater attainments; and therefore all of them might do as he did, if under the same circumstances. That natural kind of honesty, many times, is an occasion of men's being hardened against Christianity; for they are very ready to say, "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men," like him in Luke xviii. Doubtless these honest heathen would do as their fathers did, had they the opportunity. So the honest Jews did. See Matt. xxiii. 28—33.

Strange that they can have the face to make the old pretence, and say, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets," when all the time, from age to age, they have been acting over the old scene.

Remark 3. It has been owing wholly and entirely to the free grace and almighty power of God, that the church has been preserved, and true religion not driven quite out of the world. It is one of the greatest miracles that ever was wrought.

Remark 4. God has always acted sovereignly in choosing what family, nation, or nations, he would preserve true religion among; all being by nature equally averse to God, and equally unworthy, and has always acted justly in giving over other families and nations for their sin and apostasy.

Remark 5. The whole scheme of the divine conduct has been most excellently calculated to display all the divine perfections to the best advantage; and it does exhibit to us the very image of his heart in strong and lively colors. But to proceed:—

Although the external means of grace, and remarkable dispensations of Providence, perhaps may, in a measure, sometimes restrain mankind, and bring them to a feigned submission to God and his laws; yet, such is their rooted enmity and entire aversion to God and true religion, that not one will hereby be brought to repent and sincerely turn to God. (Ps. lxxviii. 34—37, and lxxxi. 8—12. Isa. v. 1—7.) Nothing short of those inward influences of the Spirit, which are almighty and all-conquering, will effectually attain the end. (Matt. xi. 20—27. Eph. i. 19.) And therefore, besides the external means of grace, God has, as it were, taken a world of pains with one and another of mankind by the inward influences of his Spirit. The external means, indeed, which have been used, are more open to observation; and so also is that external opposition which mankind have made: but the same ends which God has been pursuing by the external means, namely, to convince mankind of their sinful, guilty, ruined state, and bring them to return to God through a Mediator; the same has he been pursuing, by the inward influences of his Spirit; and the same opposition which has openly appeared against the means of grace, has also secretly wrought mightily in the hearts of men against the inward influences of the Spirit. Mankind are as much inclined to resist the Spirit, as they are the word of God, and that for the same reason and from the same temper; because both aim at the same thing:—a thing most contrary to their corruptions.

Perhaps there are some whom God never vouchsafes at all to strive with by his Spirit; and these are ready to think there is no such thing. Others are a little awakened, and, from self-love, the fears of hell, and the hopes of heaven, they reform their lives a little, and set about some external duties, and so think to make amends for their past sins, and recommend themselves to the divine favor; but are as great enemies as ever to the power of religion: and here God leaves them to perish. Others are carried farther, and become more strict and painful, but still from the same principles: and there they are left to perish. Not one takes one step in earnest, unless he is driven to it; nor goes one step farther than he is driven: and therefore God leaves one here, and another there, as seems good in his sight. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge, and therefore he gives them over to a reprobate mind, as those spoken of in Rom. i. 28. Some, indeed, are carried very far by the common influences of the Holy Spirit; they are enlightened, they taste of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost; and yet, after all, fall away and perish. (Heb. vi.) They have a great sense of their sinful, guilty, undone state; of the wrath of God, and dreadfulness of damnation, and are mightily brought down; and then have a great sense of the mercy of God, the dying love of Christ, and the glory of heaven: and they think they are converted, and they are ravished with the thought. However, in the end, all is turned to feed their pride and their presumption, and to harden and imbolden them in sin. They are not so much afraid of sin now, because they are confident they shall never go to hell. And many times this sort of people, through the great swelling of spiritual pride, and the immediate influences of Satan, come to have strange experiences; turn to be strange creatures; broach strange errors; and seem to be nearly forsaken by God, reason, and conscience: and yet, (yea, and by the same means,) get to be the holiest creatures in the world, by their own account. But while the sinners, with whom the Holy Spirit strives, do many of them turn out after this sort, some in one way and some in another, there are others with whom God makes thorough work; that is, makes them thoroughly understand and feel their sinful, guilty, helpless, undone state, and see into and believe the gospel way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, and return home to God in that way. And now they "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." And here God has mercy on whom he will have mercy; and even so it has been as to the external means of grace from the

beginning of the world. With some, God has taken more pains and longer; and with others, less pains and shorter: but when all the rest of the world degenerated to heathenism, God took effectual methods with the Israelites to keep them from doing so too. And thus, in a resembling manner, he does, with all the spiritual seed of Abraham; with his elect: whereby, in spite of all opposition, they are brought to glory at last; they are fed with manna every day: the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, is their continual guide; and the rock which follows them is Christ; that is, they are fed and are guided, they live and are refreshed, and are helped to hold on their way, by continual influences from on high, by constant communications of divine grace. And so the path of the just is like the shining light, which shines more and more to the perfect day.

Remarks. Never is any poor sinner under the light of the gospel passed by, without being awakened by the Holy Spirit; but God sees he is deaf to the voice of his word, and hates to be awakened, and loves to go on secure. Never is any awakened sinner forsaken by the Spirit of God, and left to take his own way, and run his own ruin, but that first he resisted and grieved the Holy Spirit, and stifled conviction, and rent away, as it were, out of God's hands. And never is a poor sinner savingly brought home to God and trained up for heaven, but that, from first to last, it was absolutely and entirely owing to the infinite goodness, free grace, and almighty power of God. And, indeed, thus will it appear at the great day of judgment, that all who perish are wholly to blame, and all that are saved will have none to glory in but the Lord. But I have elsewhere so much insisted upon the nature of the influences of the Holy Spirit, that I must not here enlarge.

Thus the way to life is opened by Christ Jesus, and all are invited to return and be saved. And thus we see the methods which God takes for the recovery of a sinful, guilty world. And from all that has been said, we may draw these inferences.

1. It is undoubtedly the duty of poor sinners to be deeply affected with all these wonderful methods of divine grace, and to strive and labor with the greatest painfulness and diligence, to fall in with the design of the gospel; to be sensible of their sinful, guilty, undone state, and to look to the free grace of God, through Jesus Christ, for relief, and to repent and return to God through him. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Some are of the opinion, that because the very best that sinners can do, while enemies to God in their hearts, is, as to the manner of it, sinful and odious in the eyes of the divine holiness;

that therefore their best way is to do nothing, but to sit still and wait for the Spirit; but nothing is more contrary to Scripture or reason. The Scripture says, "Strive to enter." And reason teaches, that when the God of heaven, the great Governor of the world, is thus coming out after guilty rebels in a way of mercy, it becomes them to be deeply affected thereat, and to exert all their rational powers in opposition to their sloth and corruptions, laboring to lie open to the means of conviction; avoiding every thing that tends to promote security, and to render ineffectual the methods of divine grace, and practising every thing that tends to their further awakening. And O, let this be remembered, that it is sinners' resisting the methods of grace, which causes God to give them over. "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up to their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!"

2. From what has been said, we may learn that it is madness and folly for poor sinners to use the means of grace under a notion of doing their whole duty, and so pacify their consciences. The means of grace are designed, in the first place, to convince sinners of their sinful, guilty, ruined state; and for them to forget, totally forget, this their end, and to go about to attend upon them under a notion of doing that duty which they owe to God, as something in lieu of that perfect obedience which the law requires, is quite to lose the benefit of the means of grace; yea, to thwart their very design; and tends to keep men from conviction and conversion, and seal them down in spiritual security. That which God directs them to do, to the end their consciences might be more awakened, they do, that their consciences might be more quieted. The means which were appointed to make them more sensible of their need of Christ and grace, they use to make themselves the more insensible thereof.

3. Sinners are not to use the means of grace under a notion of making amends for their past sins, and recommending themselves to God, (Rom. x. 3,) nor under a notion that by their strongest efforts they shall be ever able to renew their own nature, (Eph. ii. 1,) nor under a notion they can do any thing at all to prevail with God to renew them. (Rom. xi. 35, 36.) But, on the contrary, in the use of the means of grace, they are to seek for and labor after a thorough conviction, that they can neither make any amends for their past sins, nor in the least recommend themselves to God; that they cannot renew their own nature, nor in the least move God to show them this mercy,

to the intent, that being thus convinced of their ruined, helpless state, they may be prepared to look to the free mercy and sovereign grace of God through Christ, for all things; which is the very thing that the gospel aims at, (Rom. iii. 9—26,) and which the means of grace are designed to promote, and bring them to; and to which the Spirit of God, by his inward influences, does, in the use of means, finally bring all who are saved. (Rom. vii. 8, 9. Gal. iii. 24.)

For sinners to use the means of grace, under the other notions aforesaid, is practically to say, "We are not fallen, sinful, guilty, helpless, undone creatures; nor do we need the Redeemer or the Sanctifier which God has provided; nor do we lie at his mercy, or intend to be beholden to his mere sovereign grace. If we have sinned, we can make amends for it; if we have displeased God, we can pacify him again; if we are wicked, we can become good; or, if we do as well as we can, and then want any further help, God is obliged to help us."

If, therefore, sinners would take the wisest course to be the better for the use of the means of grace, they must try to fall in with God's design, and with the Spirit's influences, and labor to see and feel their sinful, guilty, condemned, helpless, undone state. For this end they must forsake vain company, leave their quarrelling and contention, drop their inordinate worldly pursuits, and abandon every thing which tends to keep them secure in sin, and quench the motions of the Spirit; and for this end must they read, hear, meditate, and pray; compare themselves with God's holy law, try to view themselves in the same light that God does, and pass the same judgment upon themselves; that so they may be in a way to approve of the law, and to admire the grace of the gospel; to judge and condemn themselves, and humbly to apply to the free grace of God, through Jesus Christ, for all things, and through him to return to God.

Thus have we gone through what was proposed under this third general head. We have considered the necessity there was of satisfaction for sin, and of a perfect righteousness. We have considered what satisfaction for sin has been made, and what righteousness wrought out, and wherein their sufficiency consists. We have considered how the way of life has been opened by the means; and we have considered what methods God has actually entered upon for the recovery of lost sinners to himself. And thus, now, upon the whole, we see upon what grounds the great Governor of the world considered mankind as being in a perishing condition, and whence his designs of mercy originally took their rise, and what necessity there

was for a Mediator and Redeemer, and how the way to life has been opened by him whom God has provided; and so may now pass to the next thing proposed.

SECTION VII.

SHOWING THE NATURE OF A GENUINE COMPLIANCE WITH THE GOSPEL.

IV. To show the true nature of a saving faith in Christ. And because, by the whole, I am to explain the nature of the gospel, and of a genuine compliance therewith, therefore I will begin with a more general view of things, and afterwards proceed to a more distinct survey of faith in particular.

Now, a genuine compliance with the gospel, in general, consists in a spiritual and divine sight and sense of the great truths therein presupposed and revealed; and in a firm belief of those truths, and an answerable frame of heart; as is evident from 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 5. 1 Thes. ii. 13. Matt. 13, 23. John viii. 32.

It is divine light, imparted by the Spirit of God to the soul, which lays the foundation of all. (Matt. xi. 25. Gal. i. 16. 2 Cor. 3, 18.) This spiritual and divine light, according to the language of St. Paul, shines in the heart, and consists in the knowledge of glory, (2 Cor. iv. 6;) that is, in a sense of moral beauty; a sense of that beauty there is in the moral perfections of God, and in all spiritual and divine things; that holy beauty which is peculiar to spiritual, and divine, and holy things; of which every unholy heart is perfectly insensible. (1 John i. 3, 6.) And by it, things are made to appear to us, in a measure, as they do to God himself, and to the angels and saints in heaven. And so, by it, we are made to change our minds, and are brought to be of God's mind concerning things. And so we are hereby disposed to understand, believe, entertain, and embrace the gospel. (John viii. 47.)

God, the great Governor of the world, who sees all things as being what they are, does, in the gospel, consider mankind as perishing; as fallen, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone. He looks upon the original constitution with Adam as holy, just, and good; and that, by and according to that constitution, he might have damned the whole human race, consistently with his goodness, and to the honor of his

holiness and justice. He looks upon the law of nature as holy, just, and good; and that, by and according to that, he might damn a guilty world, consistently with his goodness, and to the honor of his holiness and justice. Now, by this divine light, we are brought to look upon things as God does, and to have an answerable frame of heart.

Again, God, the great Governor of the world, who sees all things as being what they are, does, in the gospel, consider a guilty world as lying at his mercy. He saw that he was under no obligations to pity them in the least, or in the least to mitigate their punishment; much less under any obligations to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and still much less under any obligations, by his Holy Spirit, to subdue and recover such obstinate rebels, who hate him and his Son, his law and his gospel, and are perfectly averse to a return. He saw a guilty world lie at his mercy, and that he was at liberty to have mercy or not to have mercy, according to his sovereign pleasure; and that it was fit and becoming his glorious Majesty to act as a sovereign in this affair. And now, by this divine light, we are brought to look upon things as God does, and to have an answerable frame of heart.

Again, God, the great Governor of the world, who sees all things as being what they are, at the same time that he designs mercy for a guilty world, does consider a Mediator as being necessary to answer the demands of the broken law, and secure the divine honor. In such a perishing condition he sees mankind; so guilty, so justly condemned, that it would be inconsistent with the divine perfections, and contrary to all good rules of government, to pardon and save such wicked, hell-deserving rebels, without some proper atonement for their sin, and suitable honor done to his law. But the honor of his holiness and justice, law and government, is sacred in his eyes, and of infinite importance, and must be maintained; better the whole world be damned, than they in the least be sullied. And now, by this divine light, we are brought to look upon things as God does, and to have an answerable frame of heart.

Moreover, God, the great Governor of the world, who sees all things as being what they are, views his only-begotten Son as a meet person for a Mediator, and himself as having sufficient power to authorize him to the work. Of his sovereign, self-moving goodness, he, in his infinite wisdom, contrives the whole scheme; lays the whole plan, and puts his design in execution; the door of mercy is opened; the news of pardon and peace is sent through a guilty world, and all are invited to

return home to God through Jesus Christ; and God looks upon this way of salvation as being glorious for God, and safe for the poor sinner. And now, by this divine light, we are brought rightly to understand these things, and look upon them as God does, and believe them, and to have an answerable frame of heart.

Lastly, God, the great Governor of the world, does, in the gospel, consider our return unto him through Jesus Christ, not only as a duty to which we are under infinite obligations, but also as a privilege of infinite value; and, in this view of the case, he commands and invites us to return. And now, by this divine light, we are brought to look upon this also as God does, and to judge it the fittest and happiest thing in the world to return unto him through Jesus Christ, and to have an answerable frame of heart. For,

By this light we come to have a right view of the most high God; to see him, in a measure, as the saints and angels in heaven do; to see him in his infinite greatness and majesty, and in the infinite glory and beauty of his nature. And hence we are made sensible that he is infinitely worthy of the highest esteem, reverence, love, delight, and of universal obedience. And hence we see, that we, in particular, are under infinite obligations to love him with all our hearts, and obey him in every thing; and that to do so is the happiest thing in the world; that not to do so is infinitely wrong, and deserves an infinite punishment. And thus we see the grounds of the law of nature; the reasons from whence it results, and with all our hearts consent to it, and approve of it as holy, just, and good. and this naturally lays the foundation for us rightly to understand, and heartily to approve of, the original constitution with Adam. And while we behold God in his infinite glory, and view the law as holy, just, and good, and see our infinite obligations perfectly to conform unto it; now our universal depravity and infinite ill desert appear in a clear and divine light. Hence it appears we lie at mercy, and that it is fit he should have mercy on whom he will; that it becomes the Majesty of heaven to act as a sovereign in this affair. And it appears that there is no motive in us to excite his compassions, but infinitely to the contrary; and hence the heart is prepared to discern the freeness of divine grace, and to perceive that the goodness of the divine nature must be self-moving; and also to understand the need there is of a Mediator to secure the divine honor; for creatures so bad appear too vile to be relieved, unless justice may first be satisfied; it is contrary to law, and contrary to reason, that they should. And while we view these

things, and have a divine sense of them on our hearts, we are hereby prepared to understand the way of salvation by free grace through Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel. And now a sense of the glorious freeness of divine grace; the excellence and sufficiency of Christ, and the readiness of God to be reconciled to returning sinners through him, lays the foundation for faith and hope.* And all this while there is secretly enkindling in the heart a most genuine disposition to return home to God; to love him and live to him, arising from a sense of the ineffable glory and beauty of the divine nature; for he appears glorious in holiness, justice, goodness, and grace; and glorious in his sovereignty and in his majesty, as supreme Lord and high Governor of the whole world. Upon the whole, with utmost solemnity, as being in ourselves infinitely unfit for the divine favor, we venture our eternal all upon Jesus Christ as Mediator, relying on his worth and merits, and trusting to the mere free mercy of God through him, for pardon, and grace, and glory; and hence are encouraged and imboldened, with our whole hearts, to return home to God through him, and give up ourselves to God forever, to love him and live to him, and live upon him forever, lamenting that ever we sinned against him, resolving to cleave to him with all our hearts, and never, never to depart from him. (Heb. iv. 16, and x. 19—22. Eph. ii. 18. John xiv. 6. Rom. iii. 24—26.) And thus, by this divine light, imparted by the Spirit of God, is the soul finally brought to unite to Christ by faith, and to return home to God through him. "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him. They shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And from what has been said concerning the nature of the gospel, it is self-evident that herein consists a genuine compliance therewith. For all this is only to see things as being what they are, and to be affected and act accordingly.

Remark 1. This is peculiar to a genuine compliance with

* All these things (although it takes considerable time to express them in order) may, for substance, instantly open to view, and the soul immediately acquiesce in the gospel scheme and close with Christ; instantly, I say, upon divine light's being imparted to the soul. But the mind, in that solemn and awful hour, may especially fix only upon some particulars; and so a remembrance of these may remain, while other particulars, which were then in view, cannot afterwards be recollected. Hence some may doubt whether their first act of faith was right. The best way to remove such fears, is to live in the exercise of faith every day; for when these views, and a consciousness of them, become habitual, our scruples will cease of course. The special nature of our faith may be learnt from the after acts, as well as by the first act; for the after acts will be of the same nature with the first, let our faith be true or false.

the gospel, and that whereby it is specifically different from all counterfeits; namely, its being founded in, and resulting from, this divine light; whereby we are brought, not merely in speculation, but in heart, to look upon things as God does. He sees all things as they are; and therefore, when any poor sinner is brought to a right view of things, that is, to see them as they are, he must, by consequence, look upon them as God does. Now, all others being blind and ignorant in Scripture account, hence this true sight and sense of things is very peculiar and distinguishing. And hence we may observe that it is mentioned as being peculiar to the good-ground hearers, — that they heard the word and understood it. And Christ intimates that none but his true disciples know the truth. (John viii. 31, 32.) And the gospel is again and again said to be hid from all others. (Matt. xi. 25. 2 Cor. iv. 3.) And they only have it revealed unto them. (Matt. xi. 25.) They only have the veil taken off from their hearts. (2 Cor. iii. 14—17.) And they only behold with open face. (Ver. 18.)

2. This spiritual and divine light lays the foundation for a new kind of belief of the gospel. A sight of the divine beauty and glory of the gospel scheme, convinces and assures the heart that it is divine, and indeed from God, and not a cunningly devised fable. This is an evidence peculiar to the regenerate, and, of all others, it is unspeakably the most satisfactory. (See this largely explained and proved in Mr. Edwards's treatise on religious affections, pp. 182, 199.)

3. Regeneration, faith, repentance, and conversion, are, in their own nature, connected together, and so they are, in this representation. In regeneration we receive this divine light; this new spiritual sense of things. Our eyes are opened, and we are brought out of darkness into this marvellous light; and so come to have a right view of God, of ourselves, of Christ, and of the gospel way of salvation by free grace through him. This spiritual illumination lays the foundation for faith, repentance, and conversion. It discovers the grounds of faith, of repentance, and conversion; and we believe, we repent, and convert. "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," always go together; and the gospel calls sinners to repent, and be converted, as well as to believe in Christ. (Acts iii. 19.) Those, therefore, who seem to have much light, and faith, and joy, but have no repentance, nor do turn to God with all their hearts, are deluded.

4. Spiritual light and true faith are always in proportion. A spiritual sense of God, of ourselves, of Christ, and of the gospel way of salvation by free grace through him, lays the

foundation for faith; and faith naturally results therefrom: as has been observed, and as is evident from John vi. 45: and therefore, from the nature of the case, they must be in equal degree in the heart. And therefore, those who pretend to live by faith, when they are spiritually blind and dead, do but deceive themselves. Nor is what they plead from Isa. l. 10, at all to the purpose. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord; that obeyeth the voice of his servant; that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Lord, and stay upon his God." Because, 1. The persons here spoken of were not spiritually blind and dead, but had a spiritual sense of God and divine things on their hearts; for they feared the Lord, and obeyed his voice; so that they lived in the exercise of grace, and walked in the ways of holiness, which, without spiritual light, had been impossible. And, 2. What they were in the dark about, was, how, or by what means, the children of Israel should ever be brought out of the Babylonish captivity, back again to Zion; which they knew God had promised, but they could see no way wherein it could be brought about. In this respect they walked in darkness, and could see no light, and therefore they are exhorted to put their trust in the Lord, whose wisdom, power, and faithfulness, are infinite. This is evidently the meaning of the words, as is manifest from the scope and tenor of the prophet's discourse through all the ten preceding chapters, which was calculated for the support and comfort of the godly in the Babylonish captivity, by assuring them of a return.* Nor is what is said about Abraham, that against hope he believed in hope; nor what is said by St. Paul, "We walk by faith, and not by sight," any thing to their purpose; unless they suppose that Abraham and Paul, and the primitive Christians in general, were as dead, and blind, and carnal, as themselves. The truth is, that this blind faith is the very thing which the apostle James calls a dead faith.

5. Evangelical humiliation and true faith are likewise always in proportion. Evangelical humiliation consists in a sense of our own sinfulness, vileness, odiousness, and ill desert, and in a

* The first three verses of the next chapter, (Isa. li. 1—3) do, I think, confirm the above interpretation of Isa. l. 10, although, I doubt not, the prophet's discourse, through the above said ten chapters, has a further look to the Messiah's kingdom, and our redemption out of mystical Babylon. But let the words be considered in either view, or only considered in themselves absolutely, it is plain they never were designed to comfort stony-ground hearers, when their religion is all worn out, and they become dead, blind, and carnal, and so full of doubts and fears. Nor do they mean to imbolden such "firmly to believe they are in a good state, though ever so much in the dark; that is, though they see no grace in their hearts, nor signs of any." For the words are directed only to those who fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant.

disposition, thence resulting, to lie down in the dust full of self-loathing and self-abhorrence, abased before the Lord, really accounting ourselves infinitely too bad ever to venture to come into the divine presence in our own names, or to have a thought of mercy from God on the account of our own goodness. And it is this which makes us sensible of our need of a Mediator, and makes us desire to be found, not in ourselves, but in Christ; not having on our own righteousness, but his. No further, therefore, than these views and this temper prevail in us, shall we truly discern any need of Christ, or be heartily inclined to have any respect to him as a Mediator between God and us. There can, therefore, be no more of true faith in exercise, than there is of this true humility. When men, therefore, appear righteous in their own eyes, and look upon themselves as deserving well at the hands of God, on the account of their own goodness, they can feel no need of a Mediator, nor at heart have any respect to Christ under that character. (Luke v. 31.) This condemns the faith of the self-righteous formalist, who depends upon his being conscientious in his ways, and upon his sincerely endeavoring to do as well as he can, to recommend him to God. And this condemns, also, the faith of the proud enthusiast, who appears so good in his own eyes; so far from a legal spirit; so purely evangelical; so full of light and knowledge, humility and love, zeal and devotion, as that, from a sense of his own goodness, and how greatly beloved he is in the sight of God, he is encouraged and elevated, and feels greatly imboldened to come into the presence of God, and draw near, and come even to his seat, and use familiarity and boldness with God, as though he was almost an equal. Such are so far from any true sense of their need of Christ, as that they rather feel more fit to be mediators and intercessors in behalf of others, than to want one for themselves. And it is the way of such, from that great sense they have of their own goodness, to make bold with God, and to make bold with Christ, in their prayers, as if they felt themselves pretty nigh upon a level. Of all men in the world, I am ready to think that God looks upon these the worst, and hates them the most. (Luke xviii. 9—14. Isa. lxv. 5.) But did they know it, they would hate him as entirely as he does them. Hypocrites of all sorts fail in this point: they see no real need of Christ; they are not so bad but that, to their own sense and feeling, they might be pardoned and saved by the free mercy of God, without any mediator. Hence they do not understand the gospel; it is all foolishness to them. (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

6. It is a spiritual sense and firm belief of the truths of the gospel which encourages the heart to trust in Christ. (John vi. 45.) That the goodness of God is infinite and self-moving; that Christ, as Mediator, has secured the honor of God, the moral Governor of the world, and opened a way for the free and honorable exercise of his grace; that through Christ, God, the supreme Governor of the world, is actually ready to be reconciled, and invites all, the vilest not excepted, to return to him in this way; — these truths, being spiritually understood and firmly believed, convince the heart of the safety of trusting in Christ, and encourage it so to do. (Heb. x. 19. Matt. xxii. 4.)

7. Saving faith consists in that entire trust, reliance, or dependence on Jesus Christ, the great Mediator, his satisfaction and merits, mediation and intercession, which the humbled sinner has, whereby he is imboldened to return home to God in hopes of acceptance, and is encouraged to look to and trust in God through him for that complete salvation which is offered in the gospel. The opposite to justifying faith, is a self-righteous spirit and temper, whereby a man, from a conceit of, and reliance upon, his own goodness, is imboldened and encouraged to trust and hope in the mercy of God, (Heb. x. 19, 23. Luke xviii. 9, 14,) and accordingly, when such see how bad they really are, their faith fails; they naturally think that God cannot find in his heart to show mercy to such.

8. Faith imboldens the heart. In a legal humiliation, which is antecedent to spiritual light, the sinner is brought to a kind of despair. The things which used to imbolden him, do now entirely fail: he finds no good in himself; yea, he feels himself dead in sin; and upon this his heart dies within him. "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." And by spiritual light, in evangelical humiliation, his undone state, in and of himself, is made still more plain. But now faith imboldens the heart, begets new courage, lays the foundation for a new kind of hope — a hope springing entirely from a new foundation. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." By faith the heart is imboldened, 1. To return home to God, in hopes of acceptance. A spiritual sight and sense of the ineffable beauty of the divine nature begets a disposition to look upon it the fittest and happiest thing in the world to love God with all the heart, and be entirely devoted to him forever; and enkindles an inclination to return, and everlastingly give up and consecrate ourselves

unto him. "But may such a wretch as I be the Lord's? Will he accept me?" Now, the believer, understanding the way of acceptance by Christ, and seeing the safety of it, ventures his all upon this sure foundation, and hereby is imboldened to return. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" that is, first, he must see what God is; behold him in his glory, or he cannot, in a genuine manner, desire to come to him. And secondly, he must see that he is ready to be reconciled unto and to save those who, from a genuine desire to be his, do heartily return to him through the Mediator he has appointed; or else he will not dare to come. But when both these are seen and believed, now the soul will return, and come and give up itself to God, to be the Lord's forever. 2. Faith in Christ imboldens the heart to look to and trust in the free grace of God through him, for all things that just such a poor creature wants; even for all things offered in the gospel to poor sinners. "Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace." Pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace are the two great benefits of the new covenant; and these are the two great things which an enlightened soul feels the want of, and for which he is imboldened to come to God by Jesus Christ. "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," saith the Lord in the new covenant. "And this is all my salvation, and all my desire," saith the believer.

9. The word *faith*, in Scripture, is evidently used in various senses. Or thus, there are various different exercises of a godly soul, all which in Scripture are called *faith*; for I mean here to leave out all those sorts of faith, spoken of in Scripture, which the unregenerate man is capable of. 1. It is the way of godly men to live under a spiritual sense of God, his being and perfections, and government of the world, and the glory, reality, and importance of divine and eternal things; even under such a living sense of these things, as that they are firmly believed, and are made to influence them as though they were seen. Hence they are said to "look at things which are unseen;" to "see him who is invisible." And are said to "walk by faith." And this seems to be the meaning of the word *faith*, as it is used in Heb. xi., where we read of what Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, did by faith. Their faith was "the substance of things hoped for, and evidence of things not seen;" that is, it made divine and eternal things, as it were, subsist, in all their glory and importance, before their minds, and appear as evident as though they were seen, (ver. 1.)

2. It is the way of godly men to live under a spiritual sense of the divine all-sufficiency, whereby they are influenced firmly to believe that God is able to do all things for them, and be all to them, which they can possibly need in time and to eternity; by all which, they are influenced to live in a way of continual dependence upon him for all things. And this is what, in the book of Psalms and elsewhere, is called trusting in the Lord, waiting and leaning upon the Lord, making him our refuge. This temper is expressed in Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth. But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." And, ver. 28, "it is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord." 3. It is the way of godly men to live under a spiritual sense of God, as the great Governor of the world, to whom it belongs to maintain the rights of the Godhead, and the honor of the law; and under a sense of themselves as poor sinners, worthy only of destruction, according to law and justice, and too bad to be pitied or to have any mercy shown them, without some sufficient salvo to the divine honor; and under a sense of Christ as a Mediator appointed to be a propitiation for sin, to declare God's righteousness and secure the divine honor, and so open a way wherein God might be just, and yet justify the sinner that believes in Jesus; even under such a living sense of these things, as that they are firmly believed; whereby they are influenced not to draw nigh to God in their own names, imboldened by their own goodness, but only in the name of Christ, depending entirely upon him, and imboldened only by his worth and merits, mediation, and intercession, to look for acceptance in the sight of God. Hence, because of this dependence, they are said to pray in Christ's name, (John xvi. 23;) to have access to God by him, (Eph. ii. 18;) to come to God through him, (Heb. vii. 25;) to believe in God by him, (1 Pet. i. 21;) and are represented as being imboldened by his worth and merits, mediation and intercession, to approach the Majesty of heaven. (Heb. iv. 16, and x. 19.) And now this is called a coming to Christ, (John vii. 37;) a receiving him, (John i. 12;) a believing in Christ, (John iii. 15, 16;) a believing on Christ, (John iii. 18, 36;) a believing in his name, (John i. 12;) and a trusting in Christ, (Eph. i. 12, 13.) And this is that act of faith by which we are justified and entitled to life, as is evident from Rom. iii. 24—26, where it is, by the apostle, called "faith in Christ's blood." The apostle considers God as the righteous Governor of the world, (chap. i. 18,) all mankind as being guilty

before God, (chap. iii. 9—19;) Christ as being set forth to be a propitiation for sin, (ver. 25;) that God might be just and yet justify, etc., (ver. 26;) and affirms that we are justified by free grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, (ver. 24,) by faith without the deeds of the law, (ver. 28,) being considered in ourselves as ungodly, (chap. iv. 5.) And this justifying faith he calls *faith in Christ's blood;* because it was principally by the death of Christ that the ends of moral government were answered, and so law and justice satisfied, and a way opened for the honorable exercise of divine grace. But although the word *faith* be thus used in Scripture in these different senses, yet we are to remember that these various exercises of a godly soul are connected together, and always concomitant with one another; yea, and, in some respects, implied in each other; and perhaps sometimes all these actings of soul are designed by the word *faith;* nevertheless they are evidently, in their own nature, so distinct, as that they may be conceived of as distinct acts of the soul. And it may also be noted that the first two of these, namely, a firm belief of divine truths, and a hearty reliance on the divine all-sufficiency, are acts of faith common to angels as well as saints; but the last, which immediately respects Christ as Mediator, is peculiar to penitent, returning sinners. The first two are common to every holy creature; for all such do, in a firm belief of divine truths, live in an entire dependence upon God, the infinite fountain of all good; but the last is peculiar to sinful creatures, who, because they are sinful, need a mediator to make way for the honorable exercise of the divine goodness towards them. Those who never were sinners may receive all things from the free grace and self-moving goodness of the divine nature, without a mediator; but those who have been sinners perhaps will receive all through a mediator to eternity.

10. A heart to love God supremely, live to him ultimately, and delight in him superlatively; to love our neighbors as ourselves; to hate every false way; to be humble, meek, weaned from the world, heavenly-minded; to be thankful for mercies; patient under afflictions; to love enemies; to forgive injuries, and, in all things, to do as we would be done by;—a heart for all this, I say, is always in exact proportion to the degree of true faith; for the same views of our own wretchedness; of God; of Christ; of the way of salvation by free grace through him; of the glory, reality, and importance of divine and eternal things, which lay the foundation for true faith, and always accompany the exercise of faith, do, at the same time, lay the foundation for this divine temper. And besides, this divine temper is what

every true believer feels to be the fittest and happiest thing in the world, and, as such, longs for it, and goes to God to have it increased and strengthened; and, being unworthy to go in his own name,* he goes in Christ's name; so that the obtaining more and more of this divine temper is one main end of his exercising faith in Christ. And whatsoever he asks the Father in Christ's name, he receives. God is readier to give his Holy Spirit to such a one, than parents are to give bread to their children, (John xvi. 23. Matt. vii. 11;) and therefore every true believer does obtain the end of his faith; and not only has, but grows in this divine temper, and is governed by it, and brings forth fruit according to it; and thus shows his faith by his works, according to St. James's doctrine. (James ii.) And herein true faith stands distinguished from all counterfeits. Never had a hypocrite a spiritual sense of that ineffable beauty of the divine nature, which lies at the foundation of all the experiences of the true saint, and from whence all true holiness originally springs. The formalist may, from legal fears and mercenary hopes, be so strict and conscientious in his ways, as to think himself a choice, good man; and the enthusiast, from a firm persuasion of the pardon of his sins, and the love of Christ, may be so full of joy and love, zeal and devotion, as to think himself a most eminent saint; but there is nothing of the nature of true holiness in either; for it is self, and nothing but self, that is the principal, centre, and end of all their religion. They do not believe in Christ, that through him they may return home to God, and be consecrated to him forever, and obtain grace to do all his will. They do not know God, or care for him, but are wholly taken up about their own interest. That Moravian maxim, "That salvation consists in the for-

* "Unworthy to go in his own name." As thus, if, in prayer, I offer up this petition, "Lord, enable me to love thee with all my heart!" it implies, 1. That I do not love God with all my heart, notwithstanding the infinite obligations I am under to do so; for which defect I am infinitely to blame, and deserve an infinite punishment; to be instantly driven from God's presence forever, and spurned to hell as a creature fit only for destruction. 2. It implies that all the external manifestations which God has made of himself to me in his works and word, and all the external means he has used with me, are not able to win my heart wholly to God; so great is my sottishness and alienation from the Deity, and love to the world and sin. And now, surely, such a vile wretch cannot have a thought of any mercy from God, on the account of any goodness in me; yea, rather I am too bad to be pitied, unless there be some sufficient salvo to the divine honor. How, therefore, can God give me the greatest of gifts, even the sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit, but through the great Mediator, consistently with his honor as moral Governor of the world. Now, therefore, being thus unworthy to go to God in my own name, I go in Christ's name; as knowing that, through him, God can exercise his infinite, self-moving goodness to the vilest of creatures, consistently with his honor; although law and justice call for their immediate destruction, considered as in themselves.

giveness of sins," exhibits the true picture of the heart of the best hypocrite in the world; while that in 2 Cor. iii. 18, is peculiar to the godly — "We all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

11. And lastly. In true believers there is a principle of faith, which abides and grows, and perseveres to the end. That spiritual sense of God, of themselves, of Christ, and of the gospel way of salvation through him, which lays the foundation for the first act of faith, becomes habitual. They have a spiritual understanding to discern spiritual things. (1 Cor. ii. 12.) "They were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord;" and hence they are called "children of the light and of the day." (Eph. v. 8. 1 Thes. v. 5.) Spiritual light does not come upon believers like flashes of lightning at midnight; now and then a flash, and then as dark as ever again; but their light is habitual, like daylight. And from the first dawning of divine light at the hour of conversion, that day-break of heaven, their light shines more and more, year after year, to the perfect day. (Prov. iv. 18.) The flying clouds in the daytime, although they may hide the clear shining of the sun for a while, yet they do not make it dark as in the night; yea, the thickest clouds are not able to do it. Believers are never destitute of a spiritual sense of God and Christ, and divine things, as other men are. They are children of the light and of the day; and not of the night and of darkness. The Spirit of God does not come upon them by fits, as it did upon Balaam; but dwells in them. (Rom. viii. 9.) And they "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." If at any time they should have no more sense of divine things than the unregenerate, they would be as much without grace; they would not differ from the stony-ground hearers, who fell away. And now their divine light being thus habitual, growing and persevering, hence their faith is so too. Through the course of their lives, it is their way to grow more and more sensible of their sinfulness; the sinfulness of sin; their unworthiness, ill desert, poverty, and absolute need of free grace and of Jesus Christ. And they also see more and more into the gospel way of salvation; the glory and safety of it; its suitableness to exalt God, magnify the law, discountenance sin, humble the sinner, and glorify grace; and more and more come off from all self-dependence, to an entire reliance upon Jesus Christ, and the free grace of God through him; seeking to be found not in themselves, but in Christ; not as having on their own

righteousness, but his. (Phil. iii. 7—9.) They more fully approve of the law of nature, and of the original constitution with Adam, as being holy, just, and good; they more fully get into a way of looking upon themselves as God does; as being naturally, and in themselves, fallen, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone; they see more and more of their infinite obligation to perfect holiness, and of the reasonableness of eternal damnation being threatened for the least sin, and of the insufficiency of all their best doings to make any satisfaction for sin; the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel, appears more rich, and free, and wonderful; they feel more and more of their need of Christ, his worth and merits, mediation and intercession; and of their utter unfitness to approach the Majesty of heaven any other way but by him; they feel themselves more full of wants, and farther off from any worthiness to receive, and yet more and more into the temper of humble beggars, and into a way of coming to God more entirely in Christ's name. At first conversion such a temper begins; and this temper grows like the mustard seed, and spreads like the leaven, and is like a well of living water, which is never dry, but is springing up into everlasting life. (Matt. xiii. 31, 33. John iv. 14.) And thus the true believer abides in Christ as a living branch does in the vine, and lives the life he lives in the flesh, by faith on the Son of God, being kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

And this is the thing, I may observe by the way, which makes grace in the heart more plainly discernible, and its difference from all counterfeits more clearly manifest; and which, therefore, clears up to believers the spiritual state of their souls, answers all doubts, removes all difficulties, and brings them to be settled and satisfied as to their good state. Many spend their lives in searching whether their law work was right; whether their first act of faith was right, etc. But there is nothing like growing in grace, to put it out of doubt that we have grace, and to keep our evidences clear. And indeed this is the only way. (2 Pet. i. 5—10.)

And thus we see, in general, wherein a genuine compliance with the gospel does consist, and particularly what is the nature of a saving faith. And, from what has been said, we may be able to distinguish true faith from every counterfeit; particularly, from what has been said, we may easily see the falseness of these two sorts of faith, whereby thousands are deceived and ruined.

1. The legal hypocrite's faith, who, being entirely devoid

of the divine life, and of those spiritual views of God, of himself, of Christ, and of the way of salvation, which the true believer has, is only animated by self-love, the fear of hell, and the hope of heaven, to attend upon the external duties of religion, and to try to love God and be sincere, in hopes of acceptance in the sight of God, if he endeavors to do as well as he can. He thinks God has promised to accept such, and that it would not be just for God to require more of him than he can do. He does not see how bad he is; he hates to think of lying at the mere mercy of God, and cannot endure the doctrine of divine sovereignty; he is quite insensible of his need of free grace and of Jesus Christ. However, he says, he trusts wholly in the merits of Christ for eternal life, and does not pretend to merit any thing by all his doings; and thus being quieted with the hopes of heaven, he goes on in the rounds of duty, a stranger to real communion with God, and to all the exercises of the divine life. He does duties enough just to keep his conscience quiet, and has faith enough just to keep him from seeing that he rests entirely upon his own righteousness; and, by these means, his duties and his faith serve only to keep him secure in sin, and insensible of his perishing need of Jesus Christ and of converting grace.

Let me expostulate the case a little with such a one. And, first, can a man sincerely comply with the gospel, when, at the same time, he does not cordially approve of the law, as holy, just, and good, seeing the gospel, in its whole constitution, is evidently founded upon that supposition? You do not like the law; you think it is unjust. The law requires you to love God with all your heart, (Matt. xxii. 37,) and threatens damnation for the least sin, (Gal. iii. 10.) But you say it is not just for God to require more than you can do, and then damn you for not doing; but now the gospel does not mean to make void this law, but to establish it. (Rom. iii. 31.) It would be impossible, therefore, if you did but rightly understand the case, that you should like the gospel any better than you do the law. And, secondly, do you think that God will pardon you, when, at the same time, you will not acknowledge the law to be holy, just, and good, by which you stand condemned? What, pardon you, when you justify yourself, and condemn his law! What, pardon you, when you will not own you need a pardon! Yea, when you stand to it, it would not be fair to punish you! Yea, when you are ready to fly in the very face of the law, and of the Lawgiver, and to cry out, Injustice, injustice! No, no, proud, stubborn, guilty wretch: you must come down first, and lie in the dust before the Lord, and approve the law in

the very bottom of your heart, and own the sentence just by which you stand condemned. (Luke xviii. 13. Rom. iii. 19.) You must come down and own the law to be good, or else God must come down and own the law to be bad. Or, if God insists upon it that the law is holy, just, and good, and you still insist upon it that it is not, it is impossible that God should pardon you, or that there should be any reconciliation. God must of necessity hate you, because you hate his law; and you will forever hate God for making such a law. And, thirdly, how can you pretend, all this while, to trust only in Christ for pardon and eternal life, when, as it is plain from your own words, you see no need of Christ? For if, as you say, "God cannot justly require any more of you than you can do," what do you want Christ for? You can do enough yourself. Do you want Christ to make satisfaction for your short-comings and imperfections? But, according to your scheme, God cannot require any more satisfaction than you can make yourself; for this would be to require more than you can do, and to damn you for not doing. Do you want him to purchase the favor of God and eternal life? But you can do all that God can require; for you can do what you can do, and that, according to your scheme, is all that God can require. Or, do you want Christ to purchase an abatement of the law? But if Christ had never died, you do not think that God could, in justice, require more of you than you can do. What need, therefore, upon your scheme, was there of Christ? And did he not die in vain? "For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Now, can your faith in Christ be any more than a mere fancy, when, as it is evident, you see no need of him? And, besides, fourthly, what good does your faith do you? Does it work by love? Does it purify your heart? Does it overcome the world? Why, nothing less. It only serves to keep you secure and quiet in an unrenewed state, and to make you hope all is well, while you keep on in a round of external duties, strangers to God and the divine life. In a word, your duties and your faith join together to keep conscience asleep, and to render you insensible of your need of Christ and of converting grace. (Rom. ix. 30—32.) O, how sad it is, so many thousands should be deceived in so plain a case! It can surely be attributed to nothing short of this, that men love darkness rather than light; they love to frame such a scheme of religion in their heads, as suits the temper of their hearts. And because their scheme suits them, therefore they firmly believe it to be divine. But to proceed: —

2. From what has been said, we may easily see the falseness of the evangelical hypocrite's faith, who, although he makes a much greater show, and is more confident, yet has not a jot better foundation. He has been greatly awakened, perhaps, and terrified, and seemingly brought off from his own righteousness, and humbled, and then has received great light and comfort, and has had many an hour of joy and ravishment. For thus was the case: In the depth of his darkness and sorrow, light shined all around him; and, to his thinking, he saw heaven opened and the Lord sitting upon his throne, and Christ at his right hand, and heard those words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven. Fear not, little flock; it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors," etc. Or, it may be, he saw Christ on the cross, with his blood running from his side, and hands, and feet; or, perhaps he saw a light in his chamber. It may be, he had one scripture, and, it may be, ten or twenty going, until he was as full as he could hold, and even ready to cry, "Lord, stay thy hand." As to all these things, there is an endless variety; but, in the following particulars, there is a greater agreement. First. They have a discovery of Christ's love to them in particular; that he died for them in particular; that their sins are pardoned, etc. Second. The essence of their first act of faith consists in a firm persuasion that their sins are forgiven; that Christ died for them in particular, or the like. Third. All their after discoveries and after acts of faith are of the same nature with the first. Fourth. This faith, from a principle of self-love, naturally fills them full of joy, and love, and zeal, and lays the foundation of all their good frames, and of all their religion. Fifth. Doubting the goodness of their state, when they are dead and carnal, is, in their account, unbelief, and a great sin, and to be watched and prayed against, as a thing of the most destructive tendency. Now, some, who have a few discoveries, do, in a few months, lose all their religion, and come to feel and live much like the rest of the world. Others hold out longer. Some, after they have lain dead one, two, three, five, or ten years, just as it happens, will have what they call a new discovery, and be as full as ever; while others continue in their irreligious courses.

And here I may observe—First. That the greater discoveries, as they call them, they have, the more proud and conceited they are, and the more do they want to have all the town

admire them. Second. The longer they continue to be lively, the more do they grow in pride and self-righteousness; and feeling themselves to be exceedingly good, they are imboldened to make very free with the Almighty, as being his peculiar favorites, and the best of men. "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men." Third. And yet it is natural to esteem themselves some of the most humble creatures in the world. Fourth. It is impossible to convince them of their error; because the immediate witness of the Spirit of God, as they think, assures them that they are right; and, therefore, all who do not look upon things and feel just as they do, are certainly blind and carnal, and so not to be regarded: they are bound to believe God before man. Urge Scripture against them, and they are unmoved; because the Spirit does not tell them that it means so. The plainest texts are not regarded, if contrary to their spirit. Urge reason against them, and demonstrate a point ever so clearly, and they are unmoved; because that is all carnal reason. Take much pains with them, and be ever so kind and friendly, and they are the more established; because they think they are persecuted. Or, if they are sometimes shocked, and almost convinced, yet they are, in a few days. more settled than ever, by a new discovery, and a multitude of scriptures misapplied by the prince of darkness, assuring them that they are right. And now they resolve never to doubt again, and get invincibly set in their way. Fifth. If, after a while, they lose all their religion, and are dead, and lie dead for whole months and years together, yet still they are as confident as ever. "For," say they, "David, and Solomon, and Peter, fell, and the best are dead sometimes; and how long a good man may lie dead none can tell. God may leave his children out of sovereignty, and without Christ we can do nothing; we must wait for the Spirit, and not call God's faithfulness into question, because of our deadness; as if his faithfulness depended upon our good frames." And so now, having, as they suppose, Christ to pardon their sins, and save their souls, and some lusts to content their hearts, they sleep on secure and quiet. Or, if they are terrified at any time, and begin to doubt, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" or some such scripture, will quiet and hush all to sleep again. And thus, and after this sort, things go with them. And now out of such rotten hearts grow up all the Antinomian, Familistic, and Quakerish errors which have troubled the Christian church. For they get their principles of religion, not out of the Bible, but out of their experiences; and are careful to cut out a scheme in their heads to suit the religion of their hearts; and because it suits them

therefore they firmly believe it. And because their scheme is not rational, and cannot bear to be examined by reason, therefore they cry down reason, and say it is carnal. And they cry down human learning; and the more ignorant, the more devout. And because their scheme is not contained in the Scriptures, therefore they have no regard to the plain meaning of Scripture, but turn all into allegories, and what they call the spiritual meaning; and so run into a hundred whims, such as best suit the temper of their hearts.

Now, the great misery of this sort of hypocrites is, that notwithstanding all their terrors, yet they were never thoroughly convinced of their fallen, sinful, guilty, undone state by nature: and, notwithstanding all their discoveries, yet they are still spiritually blind, and neither know God, nor themselves, nor Christ, nor the gospel way of salvation by free grace through him: and, notwithstanding all their confidence, and joy, and high religious frames, yet they are as destitute of faith, repentance, and holiness, as ever they were. And it is a lie, which the father of lies has made them believe; which lies at the bottom of all their religion, and is the very foundation of it all. All their purest joy, and love, and zeal, arise from their faith. All their faith consists in believing that their sins are forgiven. And all the foundation which their faith is originally built upon, is an immediate revelation; the truth of which they dare not call in question, for fear of giving the lie to the Holy Spirit, from whom, they say, they know it came. But how could the Spirit of God reveal it to them, that Christ loved them, and that their sins were forgiven, and hereby lay the foundation for their first act of faith, when, before the first act of faith, they were actually under "condemnation, the wrath of God, and the curse of the law"? (John iii. 18, 36. Gal. iii. 10.) The thing revealed to them was not true; and therefore was not from God, but from the devil. Now, this false revelation laid the foundation for their faith, and their faith laid the foundation for their joy, and for all their religion. A spiritual sight and divine sense of the great truths presupposed and revealed in the gospel, is the foundation of the godly man's faith and holiness; but a particular thing, nowhere revealed in the Bible, is their foundation; yea, a falsehood that is directly contrary to what the Scriptures plainly teach. And yet, alas! they know they are right; they are, they say, as certain of it as they are of their own existence. How great is the power of delusion! How awful is the case of a poor creature forsaken of God! "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that

they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." But to conclude: —

From what has been said concerning the nature of a true faith and a genuine compliance with the gospel, we may not only see the falseness of these two sorts of faith, but also of all other counterfeits, which are almost in an endless variety. For between these two extremes of a legal and evangelical hypocrite, there lie a thousand by-paths, in which poor sinners wander to everlasting perdition; in the mean while, blessing themselves that they are neither Arminians nor Antinomians, nor deluded as such and such are; although they neither know God, nor themselves, nor Christ, nor the way of salvation through him; and really are as destitute of faith, repentance, and holiness, as the most deluded creature in the world.

SECTION VIII.

SHOWING WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE EVERLASTING LIFE PROMISED TO BELIEVERS, AND HOW FAITH INTERESTS US IN CHRIST.

I AM now, in the last place, —

V. To consider the promise of everlasting life, which is, in the gospel, made to true believers. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In this everlasting life is implied, —

1. The everlasting love and favor of God. Whereas, "by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners," and "judgment came upon all to condemnation," by virtue of the original constitution with Adam, and whereas, by and according to the law of nature, "the whole world stands guilty before God." Now, by virtue of a new constitution, established by the God of heaven, the great Governor of the world, called the gospel, or covenant of grace, it is appointed, and, as it were, confirmed by the broad seal of heaven, that any, whosoever they are, among all the guilty race of Adam, who fall in with this gospel proposal, and venture their all upon this new plan; this new foundation; this precious corner-stone, Jesus Christ, the great Mediator between God and man, shall thenceforth stand free from that double condemnation, and be entitled unto the everlasting love and favor of God, the great Governor of the world.

(John iii. 18. Rom. v. 1, 2.) "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

2. The other part of this everlasting life consists in, and results from, the everlasting indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a sanctifier. This, which Adam lost by the fall, is, upon our union with Christ, the second Adam, by virtue of this new constitution, restored, never to be lost any more. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." And therefore the gift of the Holy Ghost is, by the apostles, (Acts ii. 38,) promised upon the condition of faith.* And, therefore, as God did, of old, dwell in the holy of holies in the Jewish temple, in the cloud of glory, so now, henceforth, does he dwell in the believer's heart by his Holy Spirit, as a vital principle and spring of divine life there. (John xv. 1, 5.) And hence believers are called "the temple of God." The Spirit of God is said "to dwell in them," to "lead them," to give them an everlasting freedom from the power of sin, so that "sin shall not have dominion over them;" "and the water," says Christ, "which I will give you, shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

It is plain, from the whole tenor of the gospel, that the everlasting love and favor of God, together with the everlasting indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a sanctifier, which are the two great things which a poor sinner wants, are the two great things promised in the covenant of grace. St. Paul, having explained the nature of the gospel way of salvation by free grace through Jesus Christ, and shown that faith is the only condition of the new covenant, in the first four chapters of his Epistle to the Romans, proceeds to show the benefits accruing to believers. And first, they are justified, and have peace with God, (chap. v.) Secondly, they are delivered from the power of sin, (chap. vi.) And although they are, in this life, continually in a state of

* From the nature of justifying faith, it is evident that regeneration must be prior to the first act of it; but although the sinner be regenerated by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit before faith, yet it is after faith and union with Christ, that the soul has a covenant right to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; which covenant right lays a foundation for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to be constant and everlasting; and this lays a foundation for an abiding principle and proper habit of grace. So that, although regeneration be before faith, yet a confirmed habit of grace is after. It results from our union with Christ, (John xv. 1—5,) and is in Scripture promised upon the condition of faith. (John v. 24; vii. 38.)

spiritual conflict and warfare, (chap. vii.,) yet they are influenced, and led, and governed by the Spirit of God, which dwells in them, (chap. viii.) And now all things shall work for their good, and they shall be brought to glory at last, (ver. 28—39.) So again, see both these summed up in Heb. viii. 10—12: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Here is the everlasting indwelling of the Holy Spirit, together with what results therefrom. "For I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (ver. 12.) And here is the everlasting love and favor of God.

And now, seeing, by this new constitution, this covenant of grace, true believers are thus entitled to the everlasting love and favor of God, and to the everlasting indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as sanctifier, in the perfect enjoyment of both which, eternal life, in heaven, will consist; hence, therefore, they are said to have life, yea, to have eternal life, immediately upon their believing in Christ. "He that hath the Son, hath life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Eternal life is begun in them, and heaven begins to dawn in their souls. And believers, being thus made the subjects of the everlasting love and favor of God, and of the everlasting indwelling of the Holy Spirit, are hence called "the children of God." For God loves them as children, and they love him as a Father. And this filial frame of spirit, whereby they are disposed to reverence, fear, love, trust in, and obey God as a Father; live upon him, and live to him as a Father; I say, this filial frame of spirit is called the spirit of adoption, in opposition to that servile frame of spirit they used to be under the bondage of, before faith, and before they had received the Holy Ghost. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

And this filial frame of spirit being peculiar to believers; that which none but believers have, and which yet is common to all believers; and this filial frame of spirit being that wherein believers bear the image of their heavenly Father, each one

resembling the children of a King; for they view things, according to their measure, as God does, and love what God loves, and make his interest their interest, and are taken up with the same designs; I say, this filial frame of spirit being such a peculiar and remarkable thing, and that wherein they so nearly resemble God, and being also the immediate product of the indwelling and influence of the Holy Spirit, therefore, in Scripture, it is spoken of as the distinguishing badge of a true believer; as a mark whereby God's children and Christ's sheep are to be known. This is what is called "the seal of the Spirit." And this seal is the witness, evidence, and proof which the Holy Spirit gives to our consciences, "that we are the children of God." This filial frame of spirit is what satisfies and assures the children of God. They feel the very temper of children towards God. They feel a heart to reverence and fear, love and honor him as a Father; a heart to go to him; to trust in him; to be in subjection to him, and obey him as a Father. And by this they know they are his children.

Marvellous is the change which the poor sinner passes through in that awful hour of inexpressible solemnity, when he first comes into the awful presence of the dread Majesty of heaven and earth, through Jesus Christ, the glorious Mediator, venturing his all for eternity upon this sure foundation. And now, from this time forward, he is quite another creature, under quite new circumstances. As when orphan children, left without a guardian or a guide, from running into riot and indulging themselves in all extravagances, are taken and brought into the family of a wise and good man, who makes them his children; instils new principles and a new temper into them, and puts them under a new discipline, by which all things become new to them; so, here, from being without God and without hope in the world, and from running to eternal ruin, we are taken and brought into God's family; have a new temper given to us; have a new Father, and are under a new government. God's fatherly eye is upon us every hour, and he is daily laboring to bring us up to his hand; to train us up to his mind; to make us such as he would have us be. He contrives, and takes all manner of ways, by his spirit, and by his providence, and by his word, to make us more serious, spiritual, and heavenly; more humble, weaned from the world, and devoted to God. And "thus he purgeth us, that we may bring forth more fruit." (John xv. 2.) He enlightens, he leads, he teaches, he quickens, he strengthens, he comforts us. (Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. Isai. xl. 31.) When we want it, he instructs us. (1 John ii. 27. James i. 5.) When we want it, he corrects us.

(Heb. xii. 6.) And when we need it, he encourages and comforts us. (2 Cor. xii. 9.) When we love him and keep his commands, he manifests himself unto us. (John xiv. 21.) And when our spiritual enemies are too strong for us, and our heart and our strength fail, our steps are slipping, our feet just gone; in the distressing juncture he puts underneath his everlasting arms: he takes us by the right hand; he prevents us by his grace; and before we are aware, we have gotten the victory, and begin to say, Whom have we in heaven but thee? And there is none on earth we desire besides thee. Our flesh and our heart faileth; but God is the strength of our heart, and our portion forever. And O, "It is good for us to draw near to God." (Psalm lxxiii.) And if at any time we forsake him, he follows after us, and visits our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes; but never breaks his covenant with us. (Psalm lxxxix. 30—34.) He hedges up our way with thorns, and brings us to a hearty return. (Hos. ii. 6, 7.) And thus we are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. (1 Pet. i. 5.) And finally are brought to the full vision and perfect fruition of God to all eternity. (Rom. viii. 30.)

Now, faith in Christ entitles us to all this, by virtue of that divine constitution which we call the gospel, or covenant of grace; by virtue of that new and living way of salvation which God, the great Governor of the world, has contrived and provided, ratified and confirmed, the sum of which is contained in John iii. 16; which constitution God has been pleased to confirm by an oath, to the intent we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us. He has said, "He that believeth shall be saved," and he has confirmed it by an oath, to remove all doubt, and to give the highest possible assurance. (Heb. vi. 17, 18.) And now, being assured that this way of salvation may be depended upon, as being contrived and confirmed by God himself; hence, here we rest secure and safe. We know that this new constitution must be from God, because the whole plan is altogether divine; it is just like God: God cannot but be pleased with it: it is perfectly suited to exalt God; to magnify the law; to discountenance sin; to humble the sinner, and to glorify grace; and if sinners are ever saved, it is infinitely fit that they should be saved in such a way, and in no other. There is such an apparent resemblance of the divine nature and perfections in this whole plan, as is sufficient to assure the heart that it is from God. None but God could be the author of it. (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 6.) And being, in the first place, assured that it is from God, we have, in the second place, the highest assurance that

God will abide by it, and act according to it. For, first, we have his promise; and, secondly, we have his oath; so that there can be no reasonable doubt remaining. And now, upon this foundation, does the true believer build all his hopes and expectations: here is the bottom of all; for if I am assured that, by divine grace, I do rightly understand the gospel, and am brought to a genuine compliance therewith, now, then, I am safe, if the gospel be true, and if that way of salvation may certainly be depended on; if it be no cunningly devised fable, but a way of God's own contrivance, and which he will certainly abide by. A clear, rational, spiritual conviction and assurance of this, is the very anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. (Heb. vi. 19.)

If mankind had remained in a state of pure nature, that is, under no constitution at all; under nothing but merely the law of nature, that is, to have been guided and directed to their duty, and to have been rewarded or punished by God, only and merely by and according to the reason and nature of things; if this had been the case, then, so long as every individual should be continued in being by God, and should continue to love God with all his heart, and obey him in every thing, so long every individual would be perfectly happy: but then, God might, without injustice, let one or all drop into non-existence, if he pleased, and when he pleased, although perfectly holy. (Job xxii. 2; xxxv. 7.) Or, if he was pleased to continue one and all in being forever, yet, at what time soever any should commit the least sin, that soul should immediately sink down into an eternal hell, (Rom. vi. 23;) a thousand years of perfect obedience, by the mere law of nature, not entitling to any promise for the time to come. God's giving and continuing being to us, and granting us advantages to know, and love, and serve him, would render us infinitely indebted to God; but our knowing, loving, and serving God could not bring him at all in debt to us. (Rom. xi. 35, 36.) Our doing so would naturally render us happy, so long as we should continue to do so; but if, at any time, we should be guilty of the least defect, all would be lost, and we undone forever.

But then, by and according to the constitution with Adam, things were placed upon another footing. The eternal welfare of mankind was suspended upon another condition; for, according to this constitution, if Adam, the public head and representative of mankind, had remained obedient for some certain period of time, he and all his posterity would, by the free and gracious promise of God, have been entitled to everlasting life; as, on the other hand, if he sinned, all would be exposed to

eternal death. But now, faith in Christ entitles us to eternal life, by virtue of a new constitution, called the gospel or covenant of grace, made and confirmed by the God of heaven.

The perfect obedience of Adam, had he stood, would not have entitled us to eternal life, notwithstanding he was our natural head, if he had not been made our representative by a divine constitution: so the perfect obedience and sufferings of Christ would not have freed us from condemnation, and entitled us to eternal life, whatever dependence we might have had upon him, if, by a divine constitution, it had not been appointed and confirmed, that he that believeth shall be saved.

By and according to the law of nature, our own personal obedience would have recommended us to the favor of God, and laid the foundation of our happiness, so long as we should have continued in a state of sinless perfection. By the first covenant, the constitution with Adam, his perfect obedience through his appointed time of trial, would, by virtue of that constitution or covenant, have entitled us to everlasting life. By the second covenant, the perfect righteousness of Christ, the second Adam, entitles all true believers to everlasting life, by and according to this new and living way.

A perfect righteousness was necessary, according to the law of nature; and a perfect righteousness is insisted upon in both covenants. According to the law of nature, it was to be performed personally; but, according to both covenants, it is appointed to be performed by a public head. According to the first covenant, we were to have been interested in the righteousness of our public head, by virtue of our union to him as his posterity, for whom he was appointed to act. According to the second covenant, we are interested in the righteousness of Christ, our public head, by virtue of our union to him by faith.

Our faith is that whereby we unite to Christ; the act is a uniting act. We disunite, separate from, and renounce that to which we before were united, and did close with, and placed our hopes upon, namely, our own righteousness; and are no more imboldened by that to come into the presence of God. And we unite to Christ, desiring to be found, not in ourselves, but in him; not in our own righteousness, but in his. (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) And from him we take encouragement to draw nigh to God; we come in his name. (Heb. iv. 16.) And now, by virtue of a divine constitution, established by the Governor of the world, all who thus unite to Christ by faith, are considered as being one with him, so as to have an interest in what he has done and suffered in the character of a Mediator, as a public person, so as, upon the account thereof, to be pardoned, and

received to favor, and entitled to eternal life. (Rom. v. 18, 19. Eph. i. 6. Rom. iii. 24, 25.)

And now, this faith, this uniting act, being the condition, the only condition, required on our part, by the covenant of grace, we being justified by faith without the deeds of the law, hence faith is said to be imputed to us for righteousness; (Rom. iv.;) for righteousness, that is, for that whereby we stand right according to the tenor of the new covenant, that is, for a full compliance with the condition of the new covenant. As perfect obedience was a compliance with the covenant of works, so faith is a compliance of the covenant of grace. Now, as perfect obedience, through his whole time of trial, would have been imputed to Adam for righteousness, that is, for a full compliance with the condition of that covenant; so now faith is imputed for righteousness, that is, for a full compliance with the condition of this covenant. For St. Paul had but just been proving that we are justified by faith alone, without the deeds of the law; and now, this being the only condition required, therefore he says it is accounted as a full compliance with the new covenant; that is, it is imputed for righteousness. It being the only thing required as a condition of life, by the covenant of grace, hence it is looked upon in the sight of God accordingly, as being a full compliance with that covenant. The covenant of works insisted upon perfect obedience, because Adam was to have been justified merely by, and wholly upon the account of, his own virtue and goodness. And the covenant of grace insists upon faith alone, without the deeds of the law, because now we are justified merely by, and wholly upon the account of, Christ's virtue or righteousness, without regard to any goodness in us. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;" that is, for a full compliance with the new covenant, without the deeds of the law. For, as to a legal righteousness, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe;" and, in that sense, we are not to be found in our own righteousness, but in his. (Phil. iii. 8.)

Thus, according to the law of nature, every man would have been justified by his own personal righteousness: and according to the first covenant, every child of Adam would have been justified by Adam's righteousness, as public head: and according to the second covenant, every believer is to be justified by Christ's righteousness, as another public head. The first of these ways takes its rise from the reason and nature of things; but the second and third from the positive

appointment of God. The angels, it seems, were dealt with according to the first of these ways; only their state of probation, through grace, was not to be perpetual; for, no doubt, those that stood are now in a confirmed state: but mankind are dealt with according to the second and third.

The first of these ways a fallen world pretend some liking to; but the other two have given great offence. "How is it right we should be condemned for Adam's sin? Or with what propriety can we be justified on the account of Christ's righteousness?" is the language of very many. "It is unjust to condemn me for the sin of another, and absurd to justify me for another's righteousness," say they. And as to the first of these ways, they would have the law abated in what it requires, and quite disannulled as to its threatening death for the least sin. They would have what they call sincere obedience admitted as a condition of life, and repentance to be accepted in case of sin: so that an apostate world are naturally equally at enmity against the first, second, and third, rightly understood. For they think it full as unjust that God should damn us for the least defect of perfect obedience, as for Adam's first sin. And it is nothing but divine light can bring the heart of a sinner sincerely to approve of the law of nature, of the constitution with Adam, and of the gospel with Christ. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." He does not discern the ground and reason of the law of nature, being blind to the infinite beauty of the divine perfections; and so is incapacitated to have a right view and sense of the nature of the first covenant or the second. And being a stranger and an enemy to God, he also naturally doubts whether he has full power and rightful authority to make such constitutions: he dislikes the constitutions; he questions God's authority to make such: their being so plainly held forth in the Bible, tempts many to call even the truth of that into question; and some are driven quite to open infidelity.

There is a secret infidelity in the hearts of unregenerate men. They do not love that divine scheme of truths revealed in the Bible, nor cordially receive it for true. Men love to cut out a scheme of religion in their heads, to suit the temper of their hearts. And from this root do all the false and erroneous principles which fill the Christian world originally take their rise. (2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12.) But when he that commanded the light to shine out of darkness shines in the heart, and gives spiritual light, then the reasonableness, beauty, and glory

of the whole scheme appear, and the very resemolance of the divine perfections is to be seen in every branch of it; and now it is cordially believed. (John viii. 47.) And hereby a solid foundation is laid for a real conformity to the law, and a genuine compliance with the gospel; in both which true religion does consist.

Thus we have gone through what was proposed. And we see why God, the great Governor of the world, did consider mankind as perishing, fallen, sinful, guilty, justly condemned, helpless, and undone: and we see that his design of mercy originally took its rise from the mere self-moving goodness of his nature, and sovereign good pleasure: and we see the necessity there was of a Mediator, and how the way of life has been opened by him whom God has provided: and we see wherein a genuine compliance with the gospel does consist, and the nature of a true faith in Christ: and we see what is implied in the everlasting life that is promised to believers, and how faith interests us in the promise, and how that the covenant is, in all things, well ordered and sure. And now there is a wide field opened for a large improvement, in many doctrinal and practical inferences and remarks. For,

1. It is very natural to make the same observations here, with regard to a genuine compliance with the gospel, as were before made with respect to a real conformity to the law: for, from what has been said, we may easily see wherein consists that life of faith in Christ, by which true believers live; that all unregenerate men are entirely destitute of this true faith in Christ; yea, diametrically opposite thereunto in the temper of their minds, and therefore cannot be brought to it but by the almighty power and all-conquering grace of God: that there is nothing in them to move God to do this for them, but every thing to the contrary; that God is at perfect liberty to have mercy on whom he will, according to his sovereign pleasure; that it is reasonable to think that the same sovereign good pleasure, which moves him to be the author, will move him to be the finisher of our faith; that true faith, being thus specifically different from every counterfeit, may therefore be discerned and known, etc. But because I have already been larger than at first I designed, therefore I will omit these, and all other remarks which might be made; and will conclude,—

2. With only this one observation, namely: That if these things be true, which have been said concerning the nature of faith and the way of salvation by free grace through Christ, and concerning that view of things which the true believer has, then nothing is more plain and evident than that the true

believer must needs feel himself to be under the strongest obligations possible to an entire devotedness to God, and a life of universal holiness. Every thing meets, in that view of things which he has, to bind his soul forever to the Lord. One main design of the gospel was to make men holy; and it is, in its nature, perfectly well adapted to answer the end. For now all the natural obligations we are under to love God and live to him, are seen in a divine light; such as arise from the infinite excellence of the divine nature; God's entire right to us, and authority over us: and their binding nature is exhibited in a more striking and affecting manner in the gospel than in the law; the cross of Christ gives a more lively representation of the infinite evil of sin than all the thunders of Mount Sinai: and a sight of our natural obligations are attended with a sense of all the additional sacred ties, arising from the infinite goodness of God to a guilty, ruined world, in providing a Savior; from the dying love of Christ; from the free gift of converting grace; from pardoning mercy; from God's covenant love and faithfulness, and from the raised expectations of eternal glory; all which must join to beget a right sense of sin, as being a thing, in itself, the most unfit, unreasonable, and wicked, as well as infinitely disingenuous and ungrateful to God, and concur to make it appear as the worst of evils; the most to be hated, dreaded, watched and prayed against. And an humble heart, full of self-diffidence, and under a sense of the divine all-sufficiency, and in a firm belief of the truth of the gospel, will most naturally, and, as it were, continually apply itself, by faith and prayer, to God through Christ, to be kept from all sin, and to be preserved to the heavenly kingdom: so that those views which the true believer has, have the strongest tendency to universal holiness, and do naturally lay a solid foundation for it. And those views are not only maintained in a greater or less degree, from day to day, by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, which dwells in them; but are increasing and brightening through the course of their lives; so that as the grand design of the gospel is to make men holy, so it is perfectly well adapted, in its nature, to answer the end. And therefore "he that is born of God sinneth not;" and "how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" And such like Scriptures must, in the nature of things, be found to be true, in the experience of every real believer. Nor can any but graceless hypocrites be imboldened, by the doctrines of free grace, to sin, as it were, upon free cost; and a double vengeance will they pull down upon their guilty heads.

Particularly, the whole frame and tenor of the gospel naturally tends to excite us to a universal benevolence to mankind, in imitation of the infinite goodness of the divine nature; and even to be benevolent and kind to the evil and unthankful, and to those in whom there is no motive to excite our good will, but much to the contrary; and to love our enemies, and bless them that curse us, and do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. It is impossible, when we see the infinite beauty of the self-moving goodness of the divine nature, as exercised in the whole affair of our redemption and salvation, towards creatures so infinitely vile, unworthy, and ill-deserving, but that we should love that glorious goodness, and be changed into the same image, and have it become natural to us to love enemies, and forgive injuries, and be like God. A malicious Christian, a spiteful believer, is the greatest contradiction and the most unnatural thing.

That which has had no small hand in bringing the doctrines of grace into contempt in the world, as tending to licentiousness, is partly because they have not been rightly understood, and partly through the wicked lives of graceless hypocrites, who have made a high profession. What remains now, therefore, but that the people of God, by holy and exemplary lives, should convince the world that these are doctrines according to godliness?

I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present yourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service; for you are not your own, but bought with a price; and that not of silver and gold, but of the precious blood of the Son of God; and therefore live no more to yourselves, but to Him that died for you. And be ye followers of God as dear children. Blessed be God for the unspeakable gift of his Son. AMEN.

THE LAW OUR SCHOOLMASTER.

WHEREFORE THE LAW WAS OUR SCHOOLMASTER TO BRING US UNTO CHRIST, THAT WE MIGHT BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH.

Galatians iii. 24.

THE chief design of the present discourse is to give the true sense of this text, which will go far towards leading us into the nature of the Jewish religion, and of the Christian; and help to remove several dangerous mistakes, which mankind have been apt to run into. Now, in order to understand any text of Scripture, we are to consider the various circumstances of the discourse; such as the character of the persons spoken to, the manner how the text is introduced, and for what purpose; that we, seeing the occasion of what is written, and the scope and design of the inspired writer, may the more readily and certainly discern the true sense of the passage. Here, therefore, let us inquire into the character of the persons St. Paul had to deal with; the occasion and design of these words, and how they were introduced in the thread of his argument; and the grounds he saw in the nature of the Mosaic dispensation for this observation, that the law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

I. As to the character of the persons St. Paul had to deal with. They, at least the ringleaders of them, were by birth Jews, by education Pharisees, and now lately converted to Christianity; but yet zealous for some of their old pharisaical notions, fond of making proselytes to their own scheme—a scheme, in the apostle's opinion, subversive of Christianity.

While of the sect of the Pharisees, before their conversion to Christianity, they expected justification wholly by the deeds of the law. (Rom. x. 3.) But now, since their conversion to Christianity, they expected justification by the deeds of the law; and yet it seems not wholly; for they hoped that Christ would profit them some, be of some effect, and they had some dependence on grace, as is implied in the apostle's manner of reasoning in Gal. v. 2, 3, 4. As to their notions of the law of

Moses, by which they expected justification, it seems they considered it, not at all as a dispensation preparatory to Christianity, suited to show them their need of Christ, and to lead them to faith in him by types and shadows; but only as a rule of life, to which, if they conformed, they should be saved. And it seems they did not doubt, but that such a conformity to it as they were capable of, would answer the end; little considering, that if they depended upon their circumcision and their other works for life, they were obliged to keep the whole law; just as, now-a-days, there are those who ignorantly imagine, that if they endeavor to do as well as they can, they shall be saved; little thinking, that if they depend upon their own righteousness for salvation, they ought to yield a perfect obedience, as they would not finally be disappointed.

Had they viewed the law of Moses as a dispensation preparatory to Christianity, they might more readily have seen the propriety of its being abolished, and giving place to the gospel of Christ; but while they considered it, with all its rites and ceremonies, only as a rule to which they were to conform, as a condition of salvation, Christ only making up for their deficiencies, it was natural to think it of perpetual obligation; and that not only to themselves, but also to the Gentile converts. When, therefore, they observed St. Paul constantly preaching justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law, and the Gentile converts received and embraced as good Christians, without their paying any regard to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, they were chagrined, and set up themselves to oppose St. Paul, affirming, "that unless the Gentile converts were circumcised and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved." (Acts xv. 1, 5.)

And as the Jews were, in those early times, the greatest enemies Christianity had, and the most bitter persecutors, enraged to see the rites of Moses' law neglected; so these pharisaical Christians, by their zeal for Moses' law, ingratiated themselves very much in the favor of these bitter enemies of Christianity, which made them the more zealous in their way, that they might not only avoid persecution from the unbelieving Jews, but also have it to glory in, that they had proselyted so many Gentiles to be circumcised. (Gal. vi. 12, 13.) So that they were not only bigoted to their scheme by their education while Jews, and attached to it, as it suited their self-righteous temper; but also proud of it, as it freed them from the chief odium of Christianity, and screened them from the malice of its bitterest enemies. And they were in some places more than a match for St. Paul, with all his extraor-

dinary gifts. They raised such a dust at Antioch, as that Paul and Barnabas could not settle the point; but were obliged to refer it to the apostles at Jerusalem. And they made such sad work in the churches in Galatia, that although the converts there once could have even plucked out their eyes, and given to St. Paul, yet they were now much disaffected towards him, and even become his enemies. And these seducers were in imminent danger of even overthrowing Christianity in all that country; which at last obliged St. Paul to write this epistle to the several churches in Galatia.

II. Now, these were the men the apostle had to deal with; and the method he took, which was wisely adapted to let in light upon their minds and thoroughly convince their judgments, may be fully seen, if we carefully read through this epistle: but I may now only give you a brief and cursory view of some parts of it, just to let you see his manner of address, and his way of reasoning, and how our text is introduced in the thread of the apostle's argument. Which take as follows:

"This epistle is sent to the churches of Galatia, from Paul, an apostle, who received his mission, not of men, neither by men, but immediately from Jesus Christ; and it is approved by all the brethren with him, and it comes wishing you all blessings. But I am astonished and greatly marvel, after all the pains I have taken with you to instruct you into the true nature of Christianity, to see you so soon drawn away, by these seducers, to quite another kind of a gospel; which indeed is no gospel, but is a most dangerous scheme. These seducers, how plausible soever they appear, ought not to be regarded. Yea, if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that I have preached, let him be accursed. I speak plainly; for I am no trimmer. I do not make it my ultimate end to please man; but mean, in the uprightness of my heart, to be faithful to Jesus Christ. And I know I received the gospel I preached to you by immediate revelation from God, after, as it was publicly known, I had been exceedingly zealous in the pharisaical scheme; being met with in a very extraordinary manner, as I was going to Damascus. Ever since which time I have constantly preached this gospel; being instructed not even by any of the apostles, but by immediate revelation. And I have constantly maintained, that the Gentiles need not be circumcised, or keep the law of Moses; and that no man is justified by the deeds of the law, but only by faith in Christ," etc. (Chap. i. and ii.)

"Not that I countenance licentiousness. For at the same time, that I through the law am dead to all hopes of justifica-

tion by the law, I am but hereby prepared to live with a single eye to the glory of God; still having all my hopes of acceptance founded on Christ. And indeed I could not consistently preach up justification by the law. For if I did, I should quite overthrow the gospel. For if righteousness and justification come by the law, and is to be obtained by our own works, then there was no need of Christ. But he is dead in vain." (Chap. ix. 17—21.)

"O foolish, infatuated Galatians, may I not appeal even to your own experience? Cannot you recollect that an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit, in his miraculous gifts, has attended the preaching of the doctrines of grace, and not of the pharisaical scheme, as in all the churches, so also among you? And is not this a sufficient confirmation that they are from God? And were not even you yourselves converted to Christianity by these doctrines, attended with a divine influence? And can you think to perfect yourselves now by going off from this spiritual, divine scheme, to one so mean and low?" (Chap. iii. 1—5.)

"And this indeed is not any new doctrine. It is the old way of justification. Your father Abraham was, two thousand years ago, justified in this way. And in this way all his children are justified." (Ver. 6—9.)

"Besides, you cannot be justified by the law, if you are ever so desirous of it. All your hopes are built upon ignorant and mistaken notions. For it is evident that the law requires sinless perfection under the severest penalty. Therefore, so far from being justified will you be, if you adhere to this way of justification, that every man of you, who does so, will inevitably fall under the curse. For it is expressly written, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' And therefore see you remember, that if you are circumcised, and intend to be saved by the law, that you yield a sinless perfection. For I, Paul, assure every man of you that is circumcised under that notion, that he is a debtor to keep the whole law; he is bound to yield a perfect obedience, as he hopes to be saved. For if you go this way to obtain justification, I assure you, whatever you think, Christ will profit you nothing. You shall, however, you may flatter yourselves, have no benefit from him; but must stand, or fall, as you yield a perfect obedience, or not." (Chap. v. 2, 3, 4.)*

* An Arminian might justly query — Why did not the Galatians reply to St. Paul, and say, "Sir, you quite abuse us; we have no notion of being justified by law in your sense. We only depend upon our sincere obedience, and hope and expect

"And if to all this you should object, and say, And what was the law given for, if we are not to be justified by it? I reply, it was given to answer many wise ends; as, for instance, to check and restrain vice. (Chap. iii. 19.) But especially to be a schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. For by the law all sin was forbid under the highest penalty. And so by it we were shut up under sin and condemnation, and shut up to the faith. There was no way to escape the curse, but by faith. All other ways were shut up. And thus the law was to teach us our need of Christ and free grace, and to bring us to look this way for justification and eternal life." (Ver. 22, 23, 24.) And thus we see the occasion of the words, and how they were introduced in the thread of the apostle's argument.

III. And now, that we may more fully understand them, let us turn back to the sacred books of Moses, and take a view of the law given on Mount Sinai, that we may see what foundation there was in that dispensation for this observation of the inspired apostle.

Let us begin with the 19th chapter of Exodus, and see the

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to receive some benefit from Christ, and free grace, as you are sensible. We are, in the main, exactly of your mind. The dispute is only about words. We mean the same thing you do. For when you say, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, you only mean that he is justified by sincere obedience, and not by perfect. And this is just the thing we would. And you yourself know we do not pretend to perfect obedience. Why, then, do you bear down so very hard upon us, and even pronounce the man accursed that teaches our scheme, pretending that it is so essentially different from yours? We think we obey God in being circumcised, and observing the rites of Moses' law. And you think you obey God in not doing these things. We own we have been too uncharitable in thinking none could be saved, unless they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses. But if this is all the error we are in, you are full as uncharitable towards us, to doom us to destruction for such a mistake. Therefore, being now willing to give up this one point, as for all the rest, we think your own words will equally suit us both. Rom. xiv. 3, 4: 'Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not. And let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?' For as to the terms of justification, that one mistake excepted, we are exactly of your mind."

And had St. Paul been in the same scheme with our modern Arminians, I do not see how he could have answered them; being obliged to own, as he would have been, that their notions about justification were right in the main, although he had condemned them by wholesale.

But if St. Paul denied justification by any kind of obedience short of absolute perfection, how sincere soever it might be, as it is plain he did, then there was no room for the Galatians to make this reply to his manner of arguing. Nor is there any more room for the Arminian way of justification by sincere obedience, consistent with the apostle's way of reasoning. For if they will be justified by their obedience, Christ will profit them nothing, will make up for none of their defects. They therefore must yield a perfect obedience, or fall under the curse: but they do not yield a perfect obedience. As many therefore as are not only in head, but in heart, in the Arminian scheme, are under the curse, according to St. Paul. (Gal. iii. 10.)

particular steps divine wisdom took to introduce that dispensation, after that God had already in general prepared the way for it, by redeeming the children of Israel out of Egypt, by an outstretched hand, by signs and wonders, and led them through the Red Sea. Two months they had now been in the wilderness, (miraculously supplied were they with water out of the flinty rock, and with bread from heaven,) when they came to the mount of God, and all to teach them that the God of Abraham was the most high God; and to make them sensible that they were under the greatest and strongest obligations to him.

Israel pitched in the wilderness of Sinai, and there they camped before the mount. And that it might be seen whether they would receive his law, God called unto Moses out of the mountain, and sent him to the house of Jacob, and bid him tell the children of Israel, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people. For all the earth is mine." To which the children of Israel made answer, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do." "And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord." And the Lord sent him to sanctify the people that day, and the next, that they might be ready against the third day, when he would come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. "And it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." Upon which "Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God. And Mount Sinai," to look to, "was altogether on a smoke. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace. And the whole mount quaked greatly. And the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder." (Exod. xix.) "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel." And all this, to fill the hearts of the whole congregation with a sense of the greatness and majesty of God, and their infinite obligations to be obedient.

Now, from the mountain, with all these solemn and awful things attending, God gave forth his law, with a voice so exceeding loud, as to be heard by the whole congregation, containing perhaps near three millions of souls; which filled the whole congregation with so great terror, that they besought

that God would not speak any further to them in this awful manner, lest they should die under it. (Ex. xx. 18, 19.)

"And God spake all these words, saying,

"I am the LORD thy GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," etc.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," etc.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," etc.

Even ten commandments.

The sum of all which was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself."

And it was charged upon the children of Israel, when they had passed over Jordan, that they should stand, part on Mount Gerizim, and part on Mount Ebal; and that the Levites should say, "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven, or molten image," etc. "And all the people shall say, Amen." And the curse was to be repeated twelve times, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel, and all the people were to say, Amen. And to sum up the whole, the Levites were to say, "Cursed be the man that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." (Or, according to St. Paul, "that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.") "And all the people shall say, Amen." Thus the law, as requiring sinless perfection under the penalty of the curse, was, in this public manner, and with the utmost solemnity, to be approved by the whole congregation, as holy, just, and good. And all the people shall say, Amen. (Deut. xxvii.)

In case of any transgression, the only way provided and prescribed to obtain pardon, was by shedding of blood. And without shedding of blood there was no remission. The transgressor was to bring a bullock for a sin-offering to the tabernacle, and present it before the Lord; and having laid his hands on the head of the bullock, the priest was to slay him, sprinkle the blood, burn the bullock, and so make an atonement for the sin. And in this way it should be forgiven. (Lev. iv.)

Once in every year, on the great day of atonement, the high priest, dressed in his holy robes, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his heart, and with the blood of atonement in his hands, was to enter into the most holy place, even into the immediate presence of God, who dwelt there, over the mercy-seat, in the cloud of glory, to make atonement for the whole congregation. After which, on the same solemn day, the high priest was to lay both his hands on the head of a live

goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and then send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and the goat was to bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited. (Lev. xvi.)

And thus the law, by its requiring perfect obedience, and denouncing a curse for the least failing, discovered the necessity of an atonement. And thus the law, by its sin-offerings, and its blood of atonement, and its scape-goat, pointed out Christ. And thus the law was in its nature suited to be a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith.

IV. But that this point may stand in the clearest light, and the justness of the apostle's observation be seen in the plainest manner, these following particulars may be distinctly noted and illustrated: —

1. That the law given on Mount Sinai required sinless perfection of the whole congregation of Israel. If sinless perfection be defined to be a feeling and acting towards intelligent beings as being what they are, this their law required. For it required them to love God with all their heart, and obey him in every thing; and to love their neighbors as themselves, and to do as they would be done by. Which would have been to feel and act towards God and their neighbors as being just what they were. Or, if sinless perfection consists in always doing that which is right, and fit, and beautiful to be done, all things considered, still it comes to the same thing. To love God with all our heart, and obey him in every thing; and to love our neighbors as ourselves, and do as we would be done by, is the sum of what is to be done by us, as right, and fit, and beautiful. Or, if sinless perfection consists in a perfect conformity of heart and life to the will and law of God, this was plainly required. For it is essential to every law, to require an exact, and entire conformity to itself. And it is a plain contradiction to suppose that God did not require them to do *all* that he did require them to do. They were always to obey God, and never to disobey him. And the law respected their hearts and lives, their thoughts, words, and actions; all their inward tempers, and all their outward behavior. And it was never lawful for them to commit the least sin, or to omit the least duty; but as to all things written in the book of the law, they were to do them. And, —

2. This perfect obedience was the condition upon which the law promised life. "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them." This is repeated four times more in the Old Testament; once in Neh.

ix. 29; thrice in Ezek. xx. 11, 13, 21. And twice in the New Testament; once in Rom. x. 5, and once in Gal. iii. 12.

And that this life, thus promised in Moses' law upon condition of perfect obedience, implied in it eternal life and happiness, is evident from the testimony of our blessed Savior, in Luke x. 25, 28: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" said a certain Jew to Christ. To whom our Savior replied, turning him back to the law of Moses, with these questions, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" To which the man answered and said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." This he gives as the sum of Moses' law. To which our Savior replied, "Thou hast answered right. This do, and thou shalt live;" that is, inherit eternal life. The same reply our Savior made to another man, who also came to him, to know what he should do that he might have eternal life. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," said our blessed Savior. (Matt. xix. 16, 17.) It is plain, that in both these passages, our Savior means to declare how eternal life was to be obtained by the law. And he gives the same answer that Moses had done before. "Which if a man do, he shall live in them." So that, according to our Savior's interpretation of the law of Moses, eternal life was implied in the life therein promised.

This also is plain from the testimony of St. Paul, in Rom. x.; where, opposing the way to justification and eternal life by the law, to that which is by the gospel, and showing the difference, he says, (ver. 5,) "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man that doeth those things shall live by them." And then adds, (ver. 6,) "that the righteousness which is by faith speaketh on this wise," etc. "He that believeth shall be saved," (ver. 9, 10, compared with Gal. iii. 12;) where he intimates that the law does not promise justification to faith, but to perfect obedience; plainly taking it for granted, that the life promised in the law implied eternal life. I have insisted the longer on this, because, if the life promised in Moses' law implied eternal life, no doubt the death threatened implied eternal death; which seems to be the meaning of Rom. vi. 23, "the wages," (that is, according to law,) "of sin is death;" that is, eternal death and misery. Even as "the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ." Therefore I may venture to affirm, —

3. That the curse threatened in Moses' law against the man that broke it in any one point, implied in it eternal damnation,

and that without any abatements made on account of their inability.

How great their impotency was, whether from their native corruption, or from their contracted bad habits, I shall not pretend now to determine. But, as they were descendants of Adam, and had been educated in Egypt, so, I suppose, they were, at least, as bad as the generality of mankind. But be it so, they were ever so bad, ever so disinclined to yield this perfect obedience in heart and life, yet the law is not brought down to their vitiated taste and corrupt hearts; but they are still required to love God with all their hearts, and obey him in every thing, under the penalty of the curse.

Now that the law did curse every one who continued not in all things written in the book of the law to do them, is plain, from Deut. xxvii.; and that this curse comprised the sum total of the punishment due to sin, according to the law, there is no doubt. And that eternal damnation was implied in the punishment threatened in the law, and comprised in the curse in Deut. xxvii., I think is evident.

For otherwise the wicked Jews, who died in their sins, were not exposed to hell. But we see they were exposed to hell, from the representation Christ gives in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus. "The rich man died and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." This parable was spoken to the Jews then under Moses' law. But they could not have been exposed to hell, unless it were by their own law; for St. Paul expressly affirms, that they should be judged by that, and by no other. "As many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." And therefore, if their law had not threatened hell, they would not have been exposed unto it.

Besides, if the Jews, who enjoyed the benefit of divine revelation, were not exposed to hell for their sins, it is not to be supposed that the benighted Gentiles were. And if neither Jew nor Gentile were in danger of hell, previous to the coming of Christ, why did Christ come, and die, to save both Jew and Gentile from the wrath to come? (1 Thes. i. 10.)

Indeed it is plain from the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, that St. Paul takes it for granted, as an indisputable point, that the Jews by their law, as well as the Gentiles by the law of nature, were exposed to the wrath of God for the least sin; and that this wrath should be revealed and executed at the day of judgment; when, as we know, the wicked of all nations are to go away into everlasting punishment. So that, if the New Testament may be allowed to

explain the Old, there can be no doubt but eternal damnation was implied in the curse of Moses' law. And every unbiased reader will naturally view that passage in Gal. iii. 10, 13, in this light — "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse. For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." But Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us. For as the blessing of Abraham implied eternal life and happiness, so the curse of the law, from which Christ redeemed us, implied eternal death and misery; as St. Paul viewed the case.* So

* *Obj.* "Grant it, when St. Paul says, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, that by the curse he means external damnation; and by the law, he means the law of Moses; yet how could St. Paul justly give this sense to the curse of Moses' law, which seems to intend nothing more than temporal judgments? As it is written, "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket, and thy store." And so on for above fifty verses together, without one word of eternal damnation.

Ans. God designed the whole Jewish dispensation as a shadow of spiritual things. Their bondage in Egypt was a shadow of our spiritual bondage; their redemption out of Egypt, a shadow of our redemption by Christ; the land of Canaan, with all the milk and honey, a shadow of heaven and its eternal delights and joys; their being turned out of the land of Canaan for their sins, and cursed in all their temporal interests, a shadow of an eternal banishment from heaven, and of the everlasting miseries of hell; so that the curse of Moses' law was, in its spiritual meaning, of the same import with the curse that shall be executed at the last day; when the Judge shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." And accordingly, St. Paul understood it so. This is the true solution of the difficulty. And it must be quite satisfactory to those who believe, that the Jewish dispensation was by God designed to be a shadow of spiritual things. For this being supposed, and taken for granted, as indeed it is every where in the New Testament, St. Paul might be full as certain what was the spiritual, as what was the literal sense. Nor was this spiritual sense designed to be wholly hid from the whole congregation of Israel, as the learned Dr. Warburton seems to imagine; (vid. Div. Leg. Mos.) but rather, we ought to think, God designed to give them some general idea of the substance by all those shadows which were held forth before their eyes, (and in which the gospel was preached to them; Heb. iv. 2;) because otherwise these shadows would have been of no service to lead them to look to the promised Messiah, who was to come; and so the end for which they were appointed would have been frustrated. They were, therefore, not designed to secrete, but to reveal, spiritual things; not indeed clearly, but yet to give a shadow of them; and such a shadow, as was well suited to lead their minds to the substance; as might be largely shown. Particularly, all the curses written in their law against the sinner, were designed and suited, not to hide and secrete the wrath of God, but to reveal and realize it to the heart. And while the guilty Jew died sensibly under the wrath of God, and curse of the law, he could have a prospect of nothing but a miserable eternity, nor expect any thing short of eternal damnation; that is, to continue forever under the wrath of God, an accursed creature. But whether every reader shall think this the true solution of the difficulty mentioned in the objection or not, yet this is plain, that by the curse, the apostle means that eternal misery from which Christ redeems sinners; and by the law, he means the law of Moses, of which he had been speaking, and out of which he had quoted the passage he refers unto, when he says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." Read Gal. iii. 10, and compare it with Deut. xxvii. 26, and you may see, it is as evident as it can be, that he is speaking of the

that, as the law required sinless perfection of the whole congregation of Israel, and promised eternal life upon that condition; so it threatened eternal death and misery for the least failing; and that, all their inability notwithstanding. Therefore,

4. "By the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in the sight of God." But every Jew, whose conscience was thoroughly awakened, would by experience find, that the law which was ordained to life, which promised life upon perfect obedience, did sentence him to death. (Rom. vii. 10.) Indeed, if the law could have given life, then men might have been justified this way. (Gal. iii. 21.) And so the death of Christ had been needless; for if righteousness might have come by the law, then Christ had died in vain. But the law was weak through the flesh, unable to give life by reason of human depravity. It could convince of sin, (Rom. iii. 20,) if conscience was before ever so stupid, and men's false hopes ever so high and strong; yet if the commandment was set home, it could cause sin to revive, and all their false hopes to die. (Rom. vii. 9.) And it could work wrath, and fill the guilty creature with terror, (Rom. iv. 15;) for it shut him up under sin, (Gal. iii. 22,) and bound him over to eternal condemnation, and so was to him a ministration of death. (2 Cor. iii. 7.) But it was impossible he should ever obtain the favor of God and eternal life this way. For neither his circumcision, nor any of his duties, would profit him, unless he kept the whole law. (Rom. ii. 25.) He was a debtor, he was bound to keep the whole law, (Gal. v. 3,) in order to life. Therefore the Jew was properly shut up under sin, guilt, and condemnation, and bound over to eternal wrath, nor was there any other way to obtain pardon, but by shedding of blood. But the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. Therefore the Jew was shut up from all other ways, and driven to an absolute necessity to look to the promised Messiah, that he might be justified by faith in him. And thus the law was so constituted, as to be adapted not to give life, but to be a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith. Which will still further appear, if we consider, —

5. That the whole congregation of Israel were obliged, even in the sight of God, who searcheth the heart, to approve of the

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curse of Moses' law. Wherefore Dr. Doddridge's Note on Gal. iii. 13, is not satisfactory. But to conclude, if the life promised in the law of Moses, implied eternal life, as it is certain, from our Savior, that it did; then, according to the same rule of interpretation, the death threatened must imply eternal misery; as we see it did according to St. Paul. And no doubt that interpretation of the law of Moses must be right, which is thus confirmed by two such divine expositors.

law, in all its rigor, as strictly just. For in the most public and solemn manner, all the congregation of Israel, when the curse was denounced twelve times going from Mount Ebal, were twelve times to answer, and say, Amen. (Deut. xxvii.) And this was to be in the sight of God, their Lawgiver, who looks at the heart; and who would esteem their saying, Amen, a mere mockery, unless their hearts approved of it at the same time their lips pronounced Amen to it. And indeed, had they not heartily approved the law, they must have appeared in the character of enemies and rebels, in the eyes of their Lawgiver. Even the least degree of disapprobation of the law, being just so great a degree of enmity against God, their Lawgiver, who in his law to them had given a transcript of his nature. To dislike the law in such a case, had been the same thing, in effect, as to dislike God himself. And, besides, had they not heartily approved the law, in all its rigor, as strictly just, their ever pretending to bring a bullock or a goat before the Lord, and there lay their hands on the head of the consecrated animal, and deliver it to the priest to kill, to sprinkle the blood, and to burn the carcass, in order to make atonement for them, that their sin might be forgiven, — I say, all this must have been a mere farce. For if the Jew who had sinned a sin, did not deserve the threatened curse, why did he bring his atonement to God? Why did he practically say, "My blood deserves to be shed, as this bullock's is; and I deserve to be consumed in the fire of God's wrath; as this bullock in this fire"? If he did not approve the law, as strictly just, what was all this, but lying to God?* From all which it is plain, that the children of Israel were obliged heartily to approve of their law in the sight of God, in all its rigor, as strictly just; and to say, with St. Paul, "The law is holy, the commandment is holy, just, and good."

6. But if they had such a view of things, and such a temper, as would lay a foundation for them heartily to approve the law,

* And as the Jew could not consistently bring his sin-offering, or exercise faith in the promised Messiah, without a hearty approbation of the divine law; so neither could he love God, or repent, or yield any sincere obedience. For, if he thought the law too severe, he would think God too severe for giving of it; and so, not love, but dislike him; he would be disposed to justify himself in breaking it; and in all respects, have the heart of a rebel. So that, under the Jewish dispensation, there could be no virtuous action done, nothing that had the nature of real piety, or that had the least true goodness in it, in the sight of God, until the law was approved of. Till this, they must be considered as enemies to God and his law, and uninterested in the great atonement of Christ, and all their religious performances and costly sacrifices, as so many splendid pieces of hypocrisy. Where there is godly sincerity in the heart, God's law will be sincerely approved of; and nowhere else. Rom. vii. 12, and viii. 7, 8.

the same view of things, and the same temper, would prepare and dispose them heartily to approve of the gospel, and comply with it. And so, their schoolmaster would bring them to Christ, to be justified by faith.

It was impossible the Jews should heartily approve their law, in its requiring them to love God with all their hearts, and obey him in every thing, unless under a view of his supreme excellency, his entire right to them, and absolute authority over them, attended with an answerable frame of heart. Nor could they possibly approve of it, as equal and right, that the favor of God should, by their law, be suspended on this condition; unless they saw that no creature is worthy to be beloved by God, but those who love him with all their hearts, and give unto him, in all respects, and at all times, the honor and glory which is his due. Nor could they heartily approve of it, that the least contempt by them cast upon the Deity, should expose them to his everlasting displeasure; unless they saw the infinite evil of such a crime resulting from God's being infinitely worthy to be loved with all the heart, and obeyed in every thing. Nor could they heartily take all the blame to themselves, notwithstanding their inability to yield perfect obedience; unless they felt that their inability did not lessen their blame. Nor could they reconcile the eternal torments of hell, threatened by their law, to the infinite wisdom and goodness of the supreme governor, unless they saw that sin deserved so great a punishment; that it is a wise and good thing for the supreme governor of the world to punish those that treat him with contempt, according to their deserts; that this honor and respect, herein shown to the Deity, is due to his sacred majesty, and is needful to establish his authority, and secure the honor of his government.

But let a Jew have these views, and an answerable frame of heart; even such a supreme respect to the Deity, and regard for his honor, as in the nature of the thing is absolutely necessary to reconcile him to the law, and induce him heartily to approve of it, and he would at the same time be disposed to approve of and comply with the gospel. If the law, although a ministration of death, appeared glorious to the Jew, as being suited to exalt God, to secure to him his just rights, to maintain the honor of his government and authority, to deter from every instance of rebellion; much more would the gospel appear glorious, as being suited, not only to answer these ends to the best purpose, but being also, at the same time, a ministration of life. If it appeared glorious to the Jew that these ends should be answered, although by the eternal damnation

of the sinner, much more glorious would it appear, if these ends could be all answered, and yet the sinner eternally saved. If, therefore, he approved of the law, he would be even ravished with the gospel; which not only exalts God, and discountenances sin, but also humbles and saves the sinner, and glorifies grace, as it is written, "the letter killeth;" that is, the law dooms the sinner to eternal death: "but the Spirit giveth life;" that is, the gospel gives eternal life to the sinner. Now, therefore, "if the ministration of death was glorious," as indeed it was, "the glory of Moses' countenance" being a visible emblem of it, "shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness," and justification unto life, "exceed in glory."

7. And the Jew being used to see bulls and goats brought to the tabernacle, and presented before the Lord, and substituted to die in the room of the transgressor of the law; and having often himself brought a bullock or a goat before the Lord, and laid his hands upon the head of the animal, that it might die in his room, and make atonement for his sin;—I say, the Jew being thus used to see that which was without spot or blemish substituted to die for the guilty, and this method of atonement having grown familiar by long custom, he would be prepared to understand the gospel, and to take in the idea which it exhibited of the death of Christ, on whom the iniquities of us all were laid, and who died, the just for the unjust, being brought as the bullock of old, and set forth to be a propitiation for sin, that by faith in his blood we might be justified, himself being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on us. (Gal. iii. 13, 14.)

And the Jew, on the great day of atonement, from year to year, all his life long, having been used to see the high priest dressed in his holy robes, with the names of the children of Israel upon his heart, and "Holiness to the Lord" written in his forehead, enter the tabernacle, to go into the most holy place, into the immediate presence of God, with the blood of atonement in his hand, would be hereby prepared understandingly to behold our great HIGH PRIEST, CHRIST JESUS, with his own blood, enter into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us. (Heb. ix.) And thus the law was, in its whole constitution, wisely framed, and suited to be a schoolmaster to bring the Jew to Christ, that he might be justified by faith.*

* *Obj.* Under the Jewish dispensation, "the priest made atonement for sin by sacrificing a beast, only as that was a sign and testimony of the sacrificer's pure

And thus we have gone through what was proposed, have considered the occasion of the words, viewed the character of the persons the apostle had to deal with, seen how these words were introduced in the thread of the apostle's argument, and particularly considered what ground there was in the nature and constitution of the Mosaic dispensation for this observation, from all which the exact sense of the words may be clearly determined.

And that which may, if need be, still further confirm us in it, that we have entered into the apostle's very sentiments in this point, is, that this sense of the text seems exactly to harmonize with St. Paul's own experience in the case. For he was born a Jew, and educated a Pharisee, and was once very zealous in the scheme he is now confuting; and now and then, in his epistles, he drops a hint, or rather plainly declares, how he himself was brought off from the Pharisaical scheme of justification, to an entire dependence on Christ Jesus for salvation. While he was a Pharisee, he had the same superficial, indistinct, and confused notion of the law, as the rest of that sect had; as a rule to which, if he conformed his life, he should enjoy the favor of God and eternal happiness; not once imagining, that it required sinless perfection on pain of eternal damnation. "No; so far from it, that I not only thought I could, but thought I actually did, live up to what the law required. For as touching the righteousness which is in the law, I was blameless, for I was then without the law, without any knowledge or sense of its true meaning. And this was the reason my sinfulness was by me unobserved. For in those days, I saw little or no corruption in my heart; and what I did see, did not terrify me. I apprehended no danger. For while I was without the law, sin was dead. And now in these days I was an enemy to Christianity, and persecuted it, and did all I could to suppress it. For I was alive without the law at that time, confident of my own goodness, and of God's favor, and in high expectations of eternal life upon the foot of my own virtue, ignorant of God, and of his law, and of my own heart. But when the commandment, as requiring sinless perfection on pain of eternal damnation, came into view, and was set home upon

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and upright heart." — *Taylor on Atonement*, p. 22. "Nor would they be finally saved but by their own obedience." p. 114.

Ans. Then the law was not a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith, as St. Paul affirms; but rather a schoolmaster to bring them to their own righteousness, that they might be justified by that. It was adapted to train them up in a self-righteous temper, and effectually to prepare them to reject the great atonement of Christ. (Rom. x. 3.)

my heart and conscience by the Spirit of God, my fancied goodness began to appear as dung, a heap of filth, and sin revived, even all the wickedness of my heart and life rose up into clear view, and stared me in the face; and I immediately felt myself under the curse, and expected to have it executed in a moment. I stood guilty before God; I was shut up under sin; I saw no way to escape; my heart failed me; I died; I felt I was a dead man, a lost man, by law; and I gave up all hopes of ever obtaining life this way. The law which was ordained to life, and by which I thought life was to be obtained, I found to be unto death. It slew me. It killed all my false religion, and all my self-righteous hopes, and made me forever despair of obtaining life by my own goodness. And my mouth was stopped; I had nothing to say, because I saw the law was holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good. And thus I through the law became dead to the law. But ever since that solemn hour, when Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by free grace through him, was revealed in me, I have sought to be found in Christ, and expected to be justified by faith without the deeds of the law. And in a word, all my hopes and expectations are so entirely built on Christ, that I may truly say, that the life I live in the flesh, is by faith on the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." So St. Paul experienced, and so he believed, and so he preached, and so he wrote in all his epistles. (See Rom. iii. 19, 20; and chap. vii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Gal. i. 13—16; and chap. ii. 16, 19, 20. Phil. iii. 3—9.)*

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* Perhaps, by this time, some readers may begin to pause, and reason within themselves, and say, "How can these things be? I never experienced any such thing. And there are many good men I know of who never did. Nor do they think it necessary; but think as I do, that if men are sincere in the service of God, they will be saved at last. And it must be so; for neither Abraham nor David were perfect. And there is no man that liveth and sinneth not."

Ans. 1. However sincere a man may be in what he calls religion, yet he cannot possibly be sincere in the service of God, properly speaking, until after he has been brought to this right understanding of the law, and to this hearty approbation of it. He must have this right understanding of the law, or he does not so much as know what the law of God is, or what God would have him do; and therefore he cannot so much as desire to do it; or exercise any kind of sincerity about it. And if he has this right understanding of the law, he must also approve of it; or he is so far from sincerity in God's service, that he is an enemy to God. He to whom the law, although a ministration of death, does not appear glorious, in all its rigor; to him, God himself does not appear glorious. For the law is but a transcript of the divine nature. It is the very image of God's heart. Or, if any such imagine they love God, it is but a false image of God they have framed in their own fancy. For no man loves God, who does not love the law. He that is an enemy to the one, is to the other. (Rom. viii. 7.) And there is nothing in the religion of such men that pleases God. (Rom. viii. 8.)

2. And if a man is brought rightly to understand, and heartily approve of the law, it will effectually kill a self-righteous spirit, and bring him to Christ, to be

And now there is but one thing more that needs to be observed, in order to our full understanding of the apostle's reasonings upon this subject, and to prepare the way to apply all that has been said to us, who are not Jews, who were not Jews, who were never under Moses' law, but are by nature Gentiles, namely: —

That the law given at Mount Sinai, as to its moral precepts, was nothing more than a new and plainer edition and republication of the law of nature, which had been in force from the beginning of the world, and was equally binding to all nations, and in all ages; to love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, being equally the duty of the Gentiles as of Jews, and the least sin exposing Gentile as well as Jew to the everlasting wrath of God.

All this is implied in Rom. i. 18. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. He means, be they Jews or Gentiles, as is plain from what follows: one, as well as the other, is exposed to the wrath of God, for any ungodliness, or unrighteousness; that is, for any neglect of duty to God, or man, that is, for any defect of perfect holiness in heart or life. And that which makes it evident this is his true meaning, is, that in these words he designedly lays down a maxim upon which to build his whole argument, by which to prove the whole world to be guilty before God, and that no flesh, whether Jew or Greek, could be justified, in the sight of God, by their own virtue and good deeds. The sum of his argument is this: "Every sin exposes to the everlasting wrath of God. But both Jew and Gentile have sinned. Therefore both Jew and Gentile are exposed to the everlasting wrath of God." The whole world stand guilty before God. "No man can be justified by law, unless he yield a perfect obedience. But there is none righteous, no, not one, in this sense; therefore no flesh can be justified in the sight of God by law." This, I say, is the sum of his argument; which plainly supposes, that the Gentile was bound by the law of nature to sinless perfection, just as the Jew was by the law of Moses; and was equally exposed to the wrath of God for any neglect. For otherwise, the apostle's reasoning, although it might prove, that no one Jew could be justified by the law of Moses, which he was under, yet it would not

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justified by faith. So Abraham and David were justified, and all other good men. Therefore be not deceived with vain words. But perhaps you will say, (for the sinner dreads to be shut up under sin, and shut up to the faith,) "We never were under the law of Moses, and so all this is nothing to us." Well, this comes next to be considered. To the law and to the testimony let us go.

prove, that no one Gentile could be justified by the law of nature, which he was under. Which yet the apostle intended to prove; that the Gentile, as well as the Jew, might be convinced of his need of Christ and gospel grace.

Besides, if the Gentile could be justified by the law of nature, he might justly reject the gospel of Christ, upon the same ground upon which the unbelieving Jews unjustly rejected it. They rejected the gospel, because they thought they could be justified by their law. But if they could have obtained justification by their law, the apostle virtually owns their conduct was reasonable. For he grants, that if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. And he grants, that if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Which positions the Gentile might have laid hold of, and turned against the apostle, and out of his own mouth have demonstrated, that there was no necessity of Christ's dying for them, if the law of nature, which they were under, did not require sinless perfection, under pain of eternal damnation, as did the Jews' law; but only required them, as some seem vainly to imagine, sincerely to endeavor to do as well as they could, and to be sorry for their failings, and study amendment, and to trust in the mercy of God. If life might have been had in this way by the Gentiles, then Christ had died in vain, as to them.

And if this had been the case, as to the Gentiles, that they might have been thus saved by the law of nature, it will follow, that there never had been any need of Christ's death for the Jewish nation, had it not been for the law given on Mount Sinai. Had they remained only under the law of nature, they might have been saved by it too, as well as the Gentiles. And so the death of Christ was made necessary merely by the Sinai law. And so, instead of being a schoolmaster to teach the Jews their need of Christ, it was the only thing that made Christ needful; to suppose which, would overthrow law and gospel too. All which absurdities, plainly following on the present hypothesis, do sufficiently prove it to be false; and demonstrate that the law of nature did require sinless perfection on pain of eternal damnation of the Gentiles, just as the law from Mount Sinai did of the Jews. And now the apostle's argument will be conclusive, and no flesh, whether Jew or Gentile, by their own good deeds can be justified in the sight of God. For neither the law of nature, nor the law from Mount Sinai, could give life. And there was a necessity for Christ to die for the Gentile as well as the Jew; all having sinned, and the whole world standing guilty before God.

To conclude: It may be added, that sin did, according to reason and strict justice, deserve eternal damnation, antecedent to the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, or it did not. If it did, then, by the law of nature, eternal damnation was due. If it did not, then the law from Mount Sinai was too severe, in threatening a greater punishment for sin than in strict justice it deserved. But God forbid! For we are sure the judgment of God is according to truth, says the inspired apostle in this very case. And again, is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid. For then how shall God judge the world?

If it should be said, (and what is there that will not be said by guilty sinners, rather than own they deserve eternal damnation for their rebellion against the great God?)—if it should be said, that neither the law of nature, nor the law from Mount Sinai, threatened eternal damnation for sin, it must be said by the same men, in order to be consistent with themselves, that neither did Christ come to save Jew or Gentile from eternal damnation; as, antecedent to the coming of Christ, not one of mankind was in danger of eternal damnation, according to them. And as Christ himself said, he did not come into the world "to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," so these men will not say, that Christ's coming exposed the world to an eternal hell they were in no danger of before. No: so far from it, that the same first principles that will carry men to say as above, will naturally carry them one step farther, to say, that those who die impenitent from under the light of the gospel, are in no danger of eternal damnation.*

And yet will any be so inconsistent as to say thus, when the eternity of hell torments is as expressly asserted in the Bible, as the eternity of heaven's joys? They grant the happiness of heaven will be eternal; and will they deny the eternity of hell torments, which is expressed in just the same language? "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Christ has said, that their worm shall never die, their fire never be quenched, and repeated it

* Some of their first principles are, "God's only end in the moral government of the world is the happiness of the creature. There is no evil in sin as it is against God. Sin, strictly speaking, deserves no punishment. All the miseries which God inflicts upon sinners, in this world or the next, are in mere mercy, to purify and fit them for happiness. The devils and all the damned will finally be saved. For goodness or love to the creature is the only moral perfection of the divine nature." A scheme that perfectly suits the heart of a secure sinner. But a realizing sense of the being and perfections of the great God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, set home on the heart by the Spirit of God, would dash it to pieces in a moment.

over and over. And this fire is not designed for their purification, as some dream, but expressly for their destruction, for their second death, for their everlasting punishment, (Matt. xiii. 30. Luke iii. 17,) than which nothing can be plainer to determine against their notion. The righteous will be considered as the wheat, and the wicked as the chaff, and the tares, which are not to be purified, but to be burnt, and that with unquenchable fire, and the smoke of their torments shall ascend forever and ever. And this is so far from being out of love to them, as being designed at last for happiness, that in them God means to show his wrath, and make his power known, as being vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. Thus God teaches us his Word; nor can any with the least show of reason say, but that the eternity of hell torments, and that under the notion of a punishment, is as plainly and fully expressed, as though God had intended we should believe it. Why then is a guilty world so loath to believe it? Doubtless it is because they do not feel that they deserve it. And not being sensible that they deserve eternal damnation, they venture to disbelieve it, and endeavor to evade the testimony of divine revelation; and then proceed to raise objections from reason against it.

As to their methods of evading the testimony of divine revelation, they need no particular answer; because these men themselves are sensible, that the Scriptures speak quite plain enough. And if they would for once speak out their hearts, they would say, that it is not because the eternity of hell torments is not plainly revealed in Scripture, but only because they do not like to believe the doctrine, that makes them doubt it. It seems too severe that the sinner should lie in hell to all eternity. Therefore they set themselves to evade Scripture, and to raise objections against it. And no sooner will these men have heard, what has now been advanced concerning the law of Moses, and the law of nature, as requiring perfect obedience on pain of eternal damnation, but these objections will be in their minds: —

1. "It is not right for God to require of his creatures more than they can do, under the penalty of any punishment at all."

2. "If some sins do deserve some punishment, yet no sin, how great soever, deserves eternal damnation."

3. "Or rather, strictly speaking, sin deserves no punishment at all."

Now, these positions, every one will soon discern, need no particular answer from divine revelation: because the whole of divine revelation is itself a standing confutation of them. Did not God from Mount Sinai require the whole congregation

of Israel to love the Lord their God with all their heart, and obey him in every thing? And was not the curse denounced against the man that should fail in any one point? Now, could the whole congregation yield this sinless perfection every day of their lives, without the least defect in heart, or life? And did not the curse mean, at least, some punishment? And thus the whole law of Moses is a standing confutation of their first maxim. And as for the other two, if any regard was to be had to the plain declarations of the New Testament, sin not only deserves punishment, but everlasting punishment; and at the day of judgment it will be inflicted on all Christless sinners. But it is no satisfaction to these men to have their objections answered, and their mouths stopped by the word of God. For, although they pretend to believe the Holy Scriptures to be divine, yet, finding so many things in the Bible that do by no means suit them, they do as St. Paul did in another case, appeal to Cæsar, as the higher power, and where he hoped to have better justice done him. So, with the same view, these men appeal to reason; nor will they believe the Scriptures mean this or that, how plainly soever expressed, unless it quadrates with their notions, and so appears to them rational. Now, were there no depravity in their hearts, to blind and bias their minds, I should have no fear of joining issue according to their desire, and submit these points to be decided solely by reason. For I believe they can be demonstrated from reason as fully, although not so easily, as from Scripture. The Scripture has given us an edition of the law of nature, much plainer and more legible than that which we have by nature. And this indeed is the true cause that these men appeal from it, as the light of truth there shines too insufferably bright, and refer themselves to reason, which, our depravity being so great, they can more easily shut their eyes against. However, who knows but that their hearts may be touched, when the great God is brought into view, and set before their eyes! Therefore, —

Let us place ourselves before the awful tribunal of Christ, and attentively view these points, in the light in which they will stand at that solemn day, when every man's conscience will be convinced that God's law is strictly just.

When Christ comes in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him, and the infinite majesty and greatness of the invisible God shines forth in him, and it appears that all the nations of the earth are as the small dust of the balance, or drop of the bucket before him; yea, that the whole created system is as nothing and vanity, when compared to God, the

great Being, the almighty Creator, now each of these objections will be sapped at their very foundation.* When God appears, and appears in his infinite greatness, clothed with infinite majesty, vested with an authority infinitely binding, the commandment will come, sin revive, and the sinner die. Reason and natural conscience will be fully convinced, that the law was strictly just. And every guilty creature will be forced to say, when doomed to depart into everlasting fire, the Lord is righteous. Then the bold libertine, in the utmost horror, will see the weakness of all his former pleas. Methinks I hear him say, trembling before the bar of Christ, —

"What did I mean, stupid wretch that I was, to say that sin deserved no punishment? What! was it no crime to affront the dread Majesty of heaven and earth to his face, as I did in every sin? Was it no crime to treat with contempt Him whom all heaven adores? Was it no crime to turn my back upon my Maker, and revolt from my rightful Sovereign? and by my example to encourage others to go on boldly in rebellion? And if these were crimes, — and dreadful crimes I now see they were,

* For these objections, and the whole scheme they belong to in all its various shapes, grow up out of the heart's insensibility of the infinite greatness and glory of God. It would otherwise be quite impossible that men, and men of thought and penetration, should ever once imagine, that, in a perfect moral government, where an exact proportion is, as themselves acknowledge, always observed, and what is most fit, and right, and beautiful, is always done, that in such a government, the great God should be less regarded than the created system; the infinite Creator less respected than the finite creature; for it is a more gross absurdity, than it would be for a mathematician to affirm, that a million such systems as ours would be less than a pin's point. And yet, as absurd as it is, it lies at the bottom of almost all the corrupt schemes of religion now in vogue. First they lay it down for a maxim, "that the honor of the Deity is not at all considered, or regarded by the supreme moral Governor of the world; but only the good of the creature." And upon this foundation, Chevalier Ramsey builds his scheme, and so do the ingenious Hutcheson and Turnbull, and the celebrated Taylor, and so does Tindal, the famous Deist. And each, taking this point for granted, seem to demonstrate their various schemes — Ramsey, "that all, even the devils not excepted, will be finally happy;" Hutcheson and Turnbull, "that we naturally have the moral image of God in our hearts;" Taylor, "that we are not fallen creatures;" Tindal, "that the Old and New Testament are not from God."

But let this stupidity be removed from the heart, and a realizing sense of the infinite greatness and glory of God fill the soul, so as thoroughly to convince the heart, that an infinite regard is, and ought to be, had to the honor of the Deity, in the moral government of the world, and all their schemes will fall to the ground at once. For now we shall see why sin is punished eternally; and that human nature is, in fact, totally corrupt; that the doctrine of original sin is true; that the Old and New Testament are perfectly agreeable to the perfections of God, and needs of fallen man, and have all the internal marks of divinity. It will be self-evident, that it is an infinite evil to sin against such a God; we naturally have none of that temper towards him which we ought; we are fallen, lost creatures; we need such a Redeemer and such a Sanctifier as are exhibited in the Old and New Testament; it is fit God should be exalted, the sinner humbled, and grace glorified, agreeable to the Scripture plan.

— does it not now become the righteous Governor and Judge of the world to be displeased, and to testify his displeasure, and to make his wrath smoke against such a wretch? I once scoffed at serious piety, and ridiculed strict godliness, and was really an open enemy to Jesus Christ. And is it not fit that he should now treat me according to my character, and with indignation banish me forever from his presence, and from the presence of all his saints, whom once I despised, to dwell forever with devils, whose interest I served?

"This is the God, the infinitely great God, whose law I said was too severe! The height of what he required of me was to love him with all my heart; as I now see yonder saints and angels love him. But I did not love him! I did not like his ways! I loved my vain companions, and my sinful, carnal pleasures! His threatening to punish me for it, instead of reclaiming, did but make me hate his law and government the worse. And I loved to indulge hard thoughts of him, as being too severe; pretending, for my excuse, that I had no power to love him; only, alas! because I was not suited with him, but hated all his ways. In this I was like the devil, that I had no heart for God, to love him, or live to him; but was disposed to walk contrary to him in all things. And for this, God may justly hate me, and cast me off, with the devil forever. For such a kind of inability, I never thought excused any of my fellow-creatures, who treated me with disrespect and ill-nature on earth. And if they alleged, that they could not help hating me, by way of excuse; if the fault was not in me, but in themselves, I never thought them the less to blame, but the more. Their saying they could not help hating me, instead of excusing the fault, always made it seem worse. Now, this great God will deal with me by the same rule. I said, I could not love him; but the fault was not in him, but in me. For to other beings he appears infinitely amiable; and I only am to blame, that he does not appear so to me. And it is right and just I should be punished.

"And now I behold the Judge ready to pronounce my final doom, the dreadful sentence, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' I would not believe hell torments to be eternal, although expressly asserted in God's word. I, stupid wretch that I was, did not feel that I deserved everlasting punishment. I was like the fool, who said in his heart, There is no God. But now I see there is a God; an infinitely great God; whom all are under infinite obligations to honor and obey. I might have been before convinced that God was infinitely worthy to be loved, honored, and obeyed;

and that his infinite worthiness laid me under an infinite obligation; and that an infinite obligation rendered me infinitely to blame; and that infinite blame deserved infinite punishment; that is, the eternal torments of hell. I might have known this before; but I shut my eyes against the light. I pretended, that because I could not comprehend his infinite greatness and glory, that therefore I could not be laid under an infinite obligation thereby. But I might have known, that a conviction of his infinite greatness and glory did infinitely oblige. Conviction, without comprehension, I always knew did oblige in others' cases. As, when I have been convinced that others had more knowledge and wisdom than myself, I never doubted but that I was thereby obliged so much the more to pay them a superior respect on that account, although their knowledge and wisdom were above my full comprehension. Nor did I ever doubt but that those who were convinced that the torments of hell were eternal, were guilty of infinite folly, in rushing into such an endless misery, although dreadful, infinitely beyond their comprehension. And why might not I have known, that a conviction, without a comprehension, of God's infinite worthiness to be loved, honored, and obeyed, would render me infinitely to blame, in treating him with disrespect and contempt! I might have known it. But I loved darkness rather than light. I loved the ways of sin; and God was not in all my thoughts! But now, alas! the day is come! And I am at the bar, ready to receive my final doom! God is just! My mouth is stopped! I am self-condemned!"

Thus, at the day of judgment, the sinner's reason and conscience will be thoroughly convinced, that he deserves to be punished, all his impotency notwithstanding, and that even with the eternal torments of hell. And so that will be, not only a day of wrath, but also of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. And since all mankind must see the justice of God's law, sooner or later, would it not be wiser for them who esteem themselves the wits of the world, instead of endeavoring to blind their minds by false reasonings, rather to lay open their minds honestly to the light, while there is yet hope in their case? since otherwise, with all their boasted wit, they themselves, to their unspeakable regret, will eternally think they acted the part of fools.

Thus, then, to sum up all in a few words, it appears that the law from Mount Sinai, given immediately by God himself, to the whole congregation of Israel, required sinless perfection, as the condition of eternal life; and for the least failing threatened eternal damnation; and therefore, by this law, not any could be

justified in the sight of God; and yet the whole congregation were obliged heartily to approve this law to be strictly just in all its rigor; which if they did, would prepare them to understand, believe, approve of, and comply with the gospel; and so the law was, in its own nature, suited to be a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, that they might be justified by faith. And the law of nature, being for substance the same with that from Mount Sinai, is suited to answer the same end, with respect to the Gentile nations, who were never under the Jewish dispensation. And so Jew and Greek are all under sin; the whole world stand guilty before God; and by their own virtue or goodness, no flesh can be justified in his sight, and so all stand in absolute perishing need of Christ and free grace. And now, upon a review of all that has been said, the following remarks and inferences may justly be made: —

1. The law of Moses, and St. Paul's manner of reasoning upon it, are inconsistent with the Arminian scheme of religion, and do as effectually confute it, as the scheme of the Pharisees and pharisaical Christians of that age.

One of the most fundamental maxims in the Arminian scheme is, "that, in the nature of things, it is not just for God to require more of his creatures than they can do, and then threaten to punish them for not doing.* And when they are told, that we ought to distinguish between that inability which consists in, or results from, the want of natural faculties, as a man that

* And so they suppose, that God was bound in justice to make some abatements in his law, and to bring it down to a level with our present state; and yet are so absurd and inconsistent, as to suppose, that Christ died to purchase these abatements, that is, died to get justice done us. And if we will yield sincere obedience to this new abated law, we shall be justified and saved. This sincere obedience, it seems, is the utmost that God in justice can require of us. So, then, if we yield this, we shall be justified, because we have come up to the rule of our duty. Or, if we have any defects, (that is, are not so sincere as we should be,) Christ will make up for them. These are the notions of many, and they, for substance, being the very same the phraisaical Galatians had, St. Paul's arguments lie full against them. And was St. Paul to deal with them, he would say, "I, Paul, say unto you, that your duties will not save you, unless you yield a perfect obedience. And while you seek to be justified by your own goodness, Christ will be of no effect to you — will make up for none of your failings. (Gal. v. 3, 4, 5.) Therefore, every man of you, that is of this self-righteous disposition, is under the curse." (Gal. iii. 10.)

N. B. It is worthy of observation, that the apostle's argument is not, "You are not sincere in your obedience; therefore you cannot be justified." Nor would this have been so convincing; because the men he had to deal with, verily thought they were sincere. But his argument is, "You are not perfect in your obedience: therefore you cannot be justified." Now they had nothing to say, only, that they hoped Christ would make up for their defects. (But, says the apostle, "Christ shall profit you nothing.") — Unless, they added, "if we cannot be saved by our duties, what good do they do?" Wherefore then serveth the law? "To be a schoolmaster," says Paul, "to bring you to Christ, that ye might be justified by faith."

has no legs cannot walk, a man that has no hands cannot work, etc.; in which cases, men ought not to be commanded to do what they cannot, and then punished for not doing, it being manifestly unjust, as is acknowledged on all sides; I say, when they are told that we ought to distinguish between such a kind of inability, and that which consists in and results from a bad and wicked heart; as Joseph's brethren hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him, the Pharisees hated Christ, and could not hear his words, etc.; in which cases, common sense teaches that men are not the less to blame for their inability, and may justly be commanded to do their duty, and punished if they do it not. I say, when the Arminians are told of this distinction, they say, "There is nothing in it; it is a mere metaphysical nicety; inability is inability; if men cannot, they cannot; and it is impossible it should be just in God to require of his creatures what they cannot do, and then damn them for not doing."

Well, be it so: how then will they reconcile their scheme with the law of Moses? Did not the law of Moses require perfect obedience? It is plain it did. It is a fact that cannot be denied. Arminians, Pelagians, Socinians, that are men of learning, do not pretend to deny it. Well, had the whole congregation of Israel power, in the sense Arminians use the word, to yield perfect obedience, in heart and life, all their lives long, without ever failing in the least degree, in any one point, at any one time? It is plain they had not. Yea, no Arminian ever pretended they had. Well, when the Levites said, Cursed be the man that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them, were not all the people to say, Amen, and so approve the law in all its rigor? This again is plain fact. So that here the Arminian has no metaphysical niceties, (as he loves to call those clear distinctions, and conclusive arguments, which he is not able fairly to get rid of,) to grapple with; but plain facts — facts acknowledged on all hands. Now, facts are stubborn things. Here we see God gave a law, required more than they could do, denounced the curse against the man that failed in the least point; and yet, in express contradiction, the Arminian says, "It is absolutely unjust for God to require more of his creatures than they can do, and then threaten to punish them for not doing." Wherefore it is manifest, that the Arminian scheme is, in this, directly inconsistent with the law of Moses. And therefore, if the law of Moses came from God, their scheme in this fundamental maxim, and in all that depends upon it, is false.

This is a short and easy way to confute the Arminian scheme,

quite level with the capacity of common people, who are not so well able to attend to a long chain of arguments. And it was designed by a God of infinite wisdom, who knows how to let in light upon weak and ignorant minds, in effect, for this very purpose. For it was designed to convince men that, in themselves, they are absolutely lost and undone. And every thing meets in this method of confuting the Arminian scheme, which could be desired to give the fullest satisfaction to the minds of men. For the argument is not founded upon here and there a dark text of Scripture, of doubtful signification, and seemingly capable of several different meanings; but upon the plain nature of the whole Mosaic dispensation; upon facts so evident, as to be acknowledged on all hands. Nor is there so much as room left to suspect that we misunderstand the Mosaic dispensation, and view the facts in a wrong light, inasmuch as St. Paul has led the way before us, and, under divine inspiration, has shown this to be the nature and design of the Mosaic dispensation, viewing the facts in the same light, and arguing from them in the same manner, as has been already observed. That if we may give credit to the law of Moses, or to the great apostle of the Gentiles, or to a method of reasoning full of light and demonstration, or to all together, we may sit down here fully satisfied.

And as the law of Moses, and the gospel of Christ, are in a perfect harmony; and as, on this account, what is inconsistent with one must be with the other; so it is manifest from the apostle's manner of reasoning, that the aforesaid Arminian maxim is quite inconsistent with the gospel. For, according to that maxim, mankind have power to do that which would entitle them to the favor of God, if Christ had never died. But, says St. Paul, "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. And if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." *

* If the Arminian scheme is inconsistent with the law and with the gospel, it will unavoidably follow, that the religious exercises of those who are Arminians at heart, are not in conformity to law or gospel, but of a contrary nature; even their love to God, their faith in Christ, their repentance, their sincere obedience, and every other branch of their religion. The whole spirit and frame of their minds is contrary to law, and to gospel, just as their scheme of religion is. And, indeed, the scheme of religion they have in their heads, grows up out of the frame of their hearts. They are both of the same nature. They feel, as they believe, "it is not just for God to require sinless perfection on pain of eternal damnation. If I do as well as I can, it is not fair I should be damned." They would not love God, if they did not think he was of their opinion. Their faith in Christ, and their hopes of heaven, harmonize with these opinions; and so does their repentance, and their obedience. So that if these principles are inconsistent with law and gospel, it will follow, the whole system of the

I think, in this the Arminians are much more consistent. For while they maintain, "that God cannot justly require more of us than we can do ourselves," they add, "that we did not need Christ to obey or die in our stead," and accordingly, they say, "he never designed any such thing." But then, if God Almighty had designed to guard against their scheme, and to prepare the way for the reception of the doctrine of atonement by the blood of Christ, it is hard to say, how he could possibly have done it to better purpose, than he has done in the Mosaic dispensation.

No serious, pious Jew, who understood the law, as requiring sinless perfection under pain of eternal damnation, and who had heard the curse, and heartily said Amen, could have embraced the Arminian scheme, or ever once believed their fundamental maxim. Nor could any serious, pious Jew, who had seen the high priest, from year to year, on the great day of atonement, lay his hands on the head of the scape-goat, and confess over him, and lay upon him all the iniquities and sins of the children of Israel; and who had himself, scores of times, with an humble and broken heart, brought a bullock or a ram before the Lord, and laid his hands on his head, that he might die in his room, and make atonement for his sin, that it might be forgiven him; I say, no such pious Jew could possibly have embraced the Socinian scheme, or ever rejected the doctrine of Christ's atonement.

The Arminians and Socinians are angry at creeds, confessions, and catechisms; because they are taught to children, and tend to prejudice the rising generation against their scheme. But no creeds, no confessions, no catechisms, were ever so framed to prejudice one against Arminianism and Socinianism, as the law of the great God given at Mount Sinai. Creeds, confessions, catechisms, contain only a number of words and sentences. But here in the law of Moses every thing was acted over, and that exceedingly to the life. God spake the law himself, and that with an exceeding loud voice. It thundered and lightened, the mountain quaked and trembled, God appeared like the flame of a devouring fire in the eyes of all the

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religion of their hearts is so too; the scheme in their heads, and the religion of their hearts, being exactly suited to each other.

Some comfort themselves much, that the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, which Christ and his apostles had so low an opinion of, had nothing of the nature of true virtue in it; supposing this to be the only reason they could not be justified by it; little thinking that it is their own case; that there is not the least real goodness in all their religion. But it is sometimes so, that what is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

congregation of Israel. And thus the greatness and majesty, the holiness and authority of God, were represented, and brought into clear view; and thus the law was set home. And half the tribes stood on Mount Gerizim, and half the tribes stood upon Mount Ebal, and while the Levites, before all the congregation, repeated the curse twelve times going, all the people answered and said, Amen. And thus, the reasonableness and equity of the law was visibly represented in this public transaction. And yearly and monthly, and weekly and daily, in a variety of most significant, solemn, and public transactions, the substitution of Christ, as of a lamb without spot, to die as an atonement for sin, that sin might be forgiven, was visibly represented. So that it seems beyond the art of man to contrive any method more wisely suited to set the guilty, lost, perishing state of the sinner, and the doctrine of atonement, in a more clear and striking light than it is in the law of Moses; especially, as now explained to us by the gospel of Christ. Well, therefore, in so clear a case, and in points of so great importance, might the divinely inspired apostle say, as in Gal. i. 8, 9, "If any, though an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be accursed." Nor have those, who after all venture to do so, just reason to expect to escape the apostle's repeated curse. In all things lawful, the apostle would readily become all things to all men, for he was of a very condescending disposition. But when any of the great doctrines of the gospel were assaulted, he would not abate one hair; for he was no trimmer; he was no man-pleaser; but a servant of Jesus Christ. Nor are those ministers, who seek to please an ungodly world by curtailing the gospel of Christ, any of them, the servants of Christ, according to the judgment of the inspired apostle. (Gal. i. 10.) If I pleased man, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Indeed, there have been, by those who expect to be justified by their sincere obedience, various ways contrived to evade the apostle's arguments, and escape his curse; but all equally vain. Which way soever they turn, St. Paul is ready to answer them, and stop up their way, and shut them up under sin, and shut them up to the faith.

Sometimes they say, "The Galatians expected to be justified by circumcision, and observing the other rites of the ceremonial law, which being abolished, there was no virtue in these their unrequited duties, and so they could not be justified by them." But St. Paul's argument was not, "You trust in duties which God does not require: therefore by these duties you cannot be justified." But it was this: "You do not yield perfect obe-

dience to the whole law; therefore you cannot be justified." Therefore, —

They say, "It is true, we cannot be justified by a law that requires sinless perfection, nor do we expect it. But this does not prove but that our sincere obedience will justify us through Christ, according to the gospel." But St. Paul's argument was not, "You expect to be justified by sinless perfection, but cannot." But it was this: "You expect to be justified by an obedience short of sinless perfection; but no obedience short of sinless perfection will justify you. For Christ will not make up for your defects. He will profit you nothing, if you go this way for justification."*

Again, they say, "The obedience of the Galatians was not sincere. And that was the reason they could not be justified by it. But our obedience is sincere." But St. Paul's argument was not, "Your obedience is not sincere; therefore you cannot be justified by it." But it was, "Your obedience is not perfect: therefore you cannot be justified by it."

Again, they say, "Christ has purchased an abatement of the law; and promised justification to our sincere obedience." But St. Paul says, "The law is not abated one tittle; but requires sinless perfection still; and curses the man that ever at any time fails in the least point. Nor will any obedience justify, short of perfection." So that which way soever they turn, St. Paul meets them, and there is no escape.

"Yes," say they, "we hold justification by faith, just as St. Paul did. By faith he meant sincere obedience, and so do we." "No, no," says St. Paul; "if by faith you mean sincere obe-

* Gal. v. 2, Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. Not that circumcision, merely of itself, would seclude them from the blessings of the gospel. For Paul circumcised Timothy. (Acts xvi. 3.) Not that, by their being circumcised, they meant to renounce Christianity, and embrace Judaism. For they had not a thought of that, as is plain from the whole epistle. But because they trusted in their circumcision, and in their other religious performances, to recommend them to the favor of God, and entitle them to eternal life. Not that they looked upon their obedience as perfect; for they never once imagined that sinless perfection was necessary, or ever thought they were bound to keep the whole law. (Ver. 3.) Nor that they trusted in their imperfect, sincere obedience, without any dependence on Christ; for they were so strong in the faith that Christ would profit them, and be of effect to them, that St. Paul could hardly beat them off from their false hopes. He speaks, as knowing they would not readily believe him. Behold, I Paul say unto you: and so truly as I am divinely inspired, you may depend upon it: Christ will profit you nothing; will make up for none of your failings, as you vainly expect. So that, it appears, the Galatians professed Christianity, and depended upon Christ, and hoped that, through him, they, by their sincere, although imperfect obedience, should obtain the favor of God and eternal life. Just as our Arminians do now-a-days. Nor is there any essential difference between their schemes.

dience, you cannot be justified by it; for I constantly affirm, that no obedience short of sinless perfection can justify you. If you will be justified by obedience, it must be perfect. Sincere obedience will not answer. For it is written, "Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."

Seeing, then, nothing is to be done with St. Paul, but still he will be against them, therefore they run to St. James to help them against St. Paul, and look all over the Bible for help. And so having strengthened themselves by perverting some passages of Scripture, they venture out, and boldly say, "that if St. Paul does in fact mean that our sincere obedience will not justify us, he contradicts almost the whole Bible, which constantly declares, that repentance is absolutely necessary to forgiveness; that we are justified by our works, and not by faith only; that none but good men shall ever be saved; yea, that keeping the commands is what gives a right to the tree of life."

Doubtless, these men, had they lived in the apostle's day, would have been as zealous against St. Paul, as ever any were at Galatia or Antioch. Nor would his single authority have satisfied them. And if a word or sentence of another sound at any time dropped from any other of the apostles, on whatever subject they were preaching, it would have been picked up with joy, to prove St. Paul's scheme to be singular. It was this same spirit which obliged St. Paul to write this labored epistle, to vindicate himself and establish the truth. And he plainly demonstrates that their scheme was contrary to the law of Moses, and to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and pronounceth the man accursed that ventured to preach it. Vain is it, therefore, now, to bring in a detached sentence or two, from here and there in the Bible, to overset a doctrine that St. Paul affirms and proves cannot be overset, without oversetting both law and gospel. These men must prove that St. Paul's words did actually mean some other thing, or they must believe him to be right, or they must call his inspiration into question, as some of the same stamp did seventeen hundred years ago. But it is not all the wit of man can ever show St. Paul's words capable of any sense consistent with the common Arminian scheme. They have tried, but all in vain, this many a year, till many have argued themselves into downright infidelity; for he could not have framed his argument better, had he been to have written against Arminianism in its very present dress. As to the sentences of a different sound here and there in the Bible, which they refer to, their consistence with St. Paul's doctrine hath been often

shown by divines; and till these men have, at least, attempted an answer, it is needless to offer much at present.* However, I will just observe,—

First. That it is true that repentance is absolutely necessary to the forgiveness of sins.† For it belongs to the very essence of justifying faith, which implies in its nature such a sense of the great evil of sin, as effectually turns the heart from it to God, to be on his side, and on the side of his law, against sin and self, as I shall presently show. And yet this is nothing against St. Paul's doctrine, as I shall also make appear under the next inference.

Secondly. There is not the least difficulty in what St. James says of Abraham's being justified by works, and not by faith alone; it being so very plain in what respect he was justified by works, when he offered up his son Isaac. Only turn back to the twenty-second chapter of Genesis, and there you may read the whole story, and you cannot be at a loss. And it came to pass after these things, that is, fifty years after Abraham had been in a justified state, (Heb. xi. 8,) that God did tempt, that is, try Abraham. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering," etc. Abraham, whose love to God was supreme, readily obeyed. Now follows his justification, in these very words; ver. 12: "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son." And indeed this was sufficient proof that he did fear God. And thus he showed his faith, which he had had about fifty years, by his works. And now he might with peculiar propriety be called the friend of God. And in this same sense all true believers are justified by works; that is, by external, visible acts of obedience, under great trials, it becomes manifest that they do fear God; while stony-ground hearers at the same time fall away. All which has not the least show of inconsistency with our being justified by faith without works, in the sense, and according to the language, of St. Paul.

Thirdly. And if the whole Bible does constantly declare, that none but good men shall ever be saved, so does St.

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* This was done in Mr. Edwards's Sermon on Justification, printed at Boston, (N. E.,) twenty years ago, to which any answer, as yet, never has been attempted.

† And because, where there is true repentance, there is always a disposition heartily to forgive those that have injured us, and nowhere else, therefore our Savior teaches us, that those, and those only, may expect forgiveness from God, who do from the heart forgive others. (Matt. vi. 14, 15.) Those who have not a heart to forgive and love their enemies, are impenitent, unhumbled, Christless sinners.

Paul too. But this does not prove that they are saved by their goodness.

Fourthly. Yea, it is constantly maintained by St. Paul, and by all the apostles, that perseverance in all holy living, through all the great trials they may meet with, is absolutely necessary to an admittance into heaven at last. Compare Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26, and chap. iii. 5, 12, 21, with Rev. xxi. 7, and chap. xxii. 14. Yea, St. Paul, speaking to true believers, says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." But this does not prove that they are justified, or saved, by this their goodness. Yea, notwithstanding all this, and in a perfect consistence with all this, it remains true, that we are saved by grace through faith, not of works. (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) But how? Why, thus the difficulty may be easily solved. We are all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ to the heavenly inheritance. And if our actual enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance is suspended, upon our being the followers of God, as dear children, this is but a proper test to determine our character. For some, who profess to be children of God, fall away, like the stony-ground hearers, who indeed never had any root in themselves, when a time of trial comes. Now, if we persevere through all trials, it proves our sincerity; and demonstrates, that we were not merely the children of God in name, but in truth; and shows that we did really believe in Christ, not with a dead, but with a true and living faith. Thus Abraham, in this sense, was justified by his works. And thus, in this sense, they that do the commandments, have right to the tree of life. "For now I know that thou fearest God — now I know thou art a true child of God," becomes applicable to such. And if children, then heirs, according to the tenor of the new covenant.

Yea, I may add that, to persevere in all holy living, is but to show the heart, and act up to the character, of a true child of God. It is, in effect, but to maintain the temper of a child. And this is but the same thing, viewed in another point of light, with that faith whereby we become children. For justifying faith implies in it every filial grace, as we shall afterwards see. So that perseverance in all holy living, is implied in our perseverance in faith. But it is necessary we should persevere in faith, in order to our final admittance into heaven, for the same reason that it was necessary that we should be first united to Christ by faith, in order to our being interested in him. Let the marriage union be dissolved between the husband and the wife, and the woman has no longer any right

in the man's estate. It is necessary that they continue united, in marriage, that she may have right to his estate. So it is necessary that we continue in Christ, that we may remain the children of God through him; that being children, we may be heirs, and so have right to the tree of life. But to prevent misunderstandings, it is needful to observe the contents of the next inference,* which now at length I proceed unto.

2. From what has been said, we may learn, that although we are justified by faith, yet we are not justified for faith. That is, our faith, considered as something holy, virtuous, and good in us, is not that which recommends us to God, in whole, or in part. Nor has it, viewed in this point of light, any hand in our justification; for,

The true believer, considered as in himself, without any relation to Christ, does, in strict justice, deserve damnation after he believes, as much as he did before. The act of faith makes no amends for his past sins — none at all. The account stands just as it did. Only, as he falls short of sinless perfection every moment, so every moment he merits damnation afresh; according to law — a law holy, just, and good. And indeed, it must in reason be so. For if we should perfectly devote ourselves to God in heart and life for the time to come, we should but give God his just due; for we are his, wholly his. But doing our duty for the future, cannot make up for past neglects, any more than our paying the debts we may contract for the time to come, will satisfy for debts contracted in time past. Besides, our sins are infinite evils; but our virtues are of finite worth: but finite put in balance to infinite is nothing. For when it is subtracted, the remainder is still infinite. Therefore only the mere defects, attending our best services, our highest exercises of grace, in this imperfect state, merit eternal damnation. Nor does all the grace and goodness in us make the least amends. So that the believer, in his purest and highest act of faith, considered as in himself, without any relation to Christ, merits eternal damnation, instead of justification to eternal life.

Or, if we leave speculation, and come to experience, still the point before us appears to be true. For the believer feels that hell is his proper due that very moment he exercises faith in Christ. For why else does he apply to the atonement of Christ? For if he does not deserve to go to hell, he does not need the sacrifice of Christ to save him from hell. His look-

* If the reader would see this subject thoroughly discussed, let him read Mr. Edwards's sermon on Justification by Faith alone.

ing to Christ by faith, to be saved from hell, supposes he feels hell to be his proper due; else it is a mere mockery.

But it is plain from Moses, and from St. Paul, that no goodness short of sinless perfection can entitle us to the favor of God. Faith, as it is our virtue, cannot do it any more than repentance, or sincere obedience. For nothing short of sinless perfection can do it. But faith is not sinless perfection. Therefore we cannot be justified on the account of our faith. In a word, St. Paul's reasonings do as effectually prove that faith cannot justify us in this sense, as that works cannot. And indeed, faith, viewed in this light, is as much a work as any other Christian grace whatsoever, or as any external act of obedience a man can do. And he that depends upon his faith to recommend him to God, depends upon his own righteousness, as much as the Galatians did. He is in the same scheme, only a little refined. There is no essential difference. The Galatians trusted in their own righteousness. So do these. The Galatians nevertheless hoped and expected that Christ would be of some effect to them, and profit them some. And so do these. The Galatians had never had the law sufficiently set home upon their hearts. So it is with these. The only difference is, that the Galatians seem to have trusted chiefly in their external religious performances; and these trust chiefly in the internal religious frame of their hearts. But as there was nothing of the nature of true virtue in the duties of the self-righteous Galatians, so there is nothing of the nature of true faith in the faith of these self-righteous believers; it being as inconsistent with the nature of faith in Christ, for a man to make a righteousness of his faith, as it is to make a righteousness of any thing else.

If it should be inquired, "In what sense then are we justified by faith?" I answer, When the Jew brought a bullock for a sin-offering, and presented it before the Lord, and laid his hands on the head of it, that it might die in his stead, and make an atonement for his sin, that it might be forgiven; if he acted understandingly, and uprightly, it implied a hearty approbation of the law; which he could not have, without a supreme love to God, which would naturally lay the foundation for repentance and sincere obedience. Yet it was not that approbation of the law, nor that love to God, nor that repentance, nor that sincere obedience, nor his bringing the bullock, nor his laying his hands on his head, which was to make atonement for his sin; but the blood of the bullock; according to the constant language of the law of Moses. So, although true faith in Christ implies a hearty approbation of the law,

which cannot be without a supreme love to God, which will naturally lay a foundation for repentance and sincere obedience, yet it is not this hearty approbation of the law, nor this supreme love to God, nor this repentance, nor this sincere obedience, no, nor the act of faith itself, that makes atonement for sin; but only the blood of Christ; according to the constant language of the New Testament. Nor are any of these, therefore, to be depended upon; but only Jesus Christ. Nor can faith do any thing towards justifying us, unless as it unites us to Christ. For in the very act of faith, all pretences to the divine favor on our own account are given up; and hell is owned to be our due. And we look only to the merits and atonement of Christ; leave all other refuges, and fly hither; are divorced from the law, and married to Christ; according to the language of St. Paul. (Rom. vii.) And the married wife, we know, is interested in her husband's estate. For they two are become one flesh. They are one in law. And in consequence of this relation, this union, or oneness, she is interested in all his riches and honor; even if he is a prince, and she before but a poor, despised maid. And this marriage union St. Paul considers as resembling the union between Christ and believers, and dwells upon it at large in Eph. v. 23—32. And as the husband pays his wife's debts, so Christ gave himself for his church, to pay the ten thousand talents she owed, and to redeem her to himself, to be his wife; to be forever "one with him, as he and his Father are one." And therefore a new convert is said to be espoused to Christ. For in the first act of faith, the match is made for eternity.

And the whole church, being but one mystical body, is called the bride, the Lamb's wife. (Rev. xxi. 9.) And, if the church is the Lamb's wife, then the church is God's daughter, God's child, and every true believer is a child of God. As it is written, as many as received him, to them gave he power, or a right to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Wherefore they are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. And thus by faith we are united to Christ, and so interested in him and in all blessings through him. And this is the reason that believers, in the constant language of the New Testament, are said to be in Christ. But Christ is God's beloved Son; and so we are accepted in the beloved. And after our persons are accepted, then also our spiritual sacrifices, all our religious duties and holy exercises, in which we present ourselves to God, as a living sacrifice, are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. And thus we are justified

by faith, not as a holy act, recommending us to God, but as a uniting act, uniting us to Christ. Just as a married wife, being one in law with her husband, is consequently interested in his estate. Not because her marrying her husband was an act of virtue; but because her marriage made her one with him.

St. Paul dearly loves, in his writings, to illustrate gospel truths by Jewish types; that people, their law, and almost all God's dispensations towards them, being designed by God to be shadows of good things to come. The earthly Canaan was a type of the heavenly; and Isaac, the promised son, was a type of Christ, the promised seed. And as the Israelites were entitled to the earthly Canaan, not by law, but by promise, the promise made to Abraham in Gen. xii., in which God made a grant of all that country to him, and to his seed; so it was not any goodness in Abraham's seed, but only their relation to Abraham, that gave them a title to that good land. If they were Abraham's seed, they were heirs according to the promise; the law, which was given four hundred and thirty years after, not being designed to disannul their former title, or to appoint any new terms. (Rom. iv. 14. Gal. iii. 16, 17, 18.) Even so it is in this case, says the apostle. Our title to the heavenly Canaan is not by law, not by any goodness in us; but if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. For the promise was to Abraham and to his seed; not to seeds, as of many; but as of one, to thy seed, which is Christ. And so Christ was appointed heir of all things. Now, therefore, if we are Christ's, that is, if we are in Christ, by faith, we are joint heirs with him. And so our title to the heavenly Canaan results, not from any goodness in us, but only from our relation to Christ. Therefore faith justifies us, not as a holy act, recommending us to God, but as a uniting act, uniting us to Christ. Just as a descendant of Abraham was entitled to the earthly Canaan by birth; not because it was a virtue to be born of Jewish parents, but only because by this means he was a child of Abraham; and so an heir according to promise.

And thus we are saved by grace through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. Not in the least degree, or in any respect, for any goodness in us, considered merely as in ourselves, that there might not be the least ground of boasting; but that all the glory might be given to free grace through Jesus Christ. Arminians and Neonomians suppose it is in some degree for some goodness in us; and so take some of the glory to themselves, and give the rest to Christ and free grace. Socinians suppose they are justified wholly for their own goodness;

and so take the whole glory to themselves. For they consider Christ on the cross, not as a sacrifice of atonement, but only as a martyr. But St. Paul gives quite all the glory to Christ and free grace. And the reason is, because the very best man on earth, afresh merits eternal damnation every hour, according to law and strict justice; and all his goodness does not make the very least amends. So the law, which is a schoolmaster, by divine appointment, teacheth. O, learn this, and then you will understand the doctrine of justification by faith, and know why St. Paul, after all his attainments, so earnestly desired to be found in Christ. (Phil. iii. 9.)

3. From what has been said, we may see what views and dispositions are absolutely necessary, in order to a sinner's understandingly and consistently exercising faith in Christ, to the end he may be justified through him. He must have a view of himself as he is, compared with the law; and of his state as it is, according to law; and heartily approve the law, as being strictly just.

As when the children of Israel were about to enter into the land of Canaan, which was a type of heaven, the law was by Moses repeated in the plains of Moab; and just as they took possession of the holy land, they were obliged to signify their hearty approbation of the whole law in its utmost rigor, by answering, Amen, twelve times going, as the Levites denounced the curse; so, before a sinner can come to Christ, and be through him entitled to the heavenly Canaan, the commandment must come, be set home on his conscience, that sin may revive, and his guilty state appear, and all his hopes grounded on his own goodness die. Nor can he consistently apply to Christ, the great atonement, unless from his heart he approves the law by which he stands condemned, as strictly just.

As the Israelites had no title to the land of Canaan by law, in consequence of their own righteousness, being a stiff-necked people, but only by the promise made to Abraham, (Gal. iii. 18,) so it was fit they should see, and be thoroughly sensible, that God did not do those great things for them for their righteousness. And therefore such a method was by God taken with that generation for the space of forty years, as had the most direct tendency to answer this end. (Deut. viii. and ix.) And so it is, in a resembling manner, with sinners, according to God's ordinary way of preparing them for Christ; and a title to eternal life through him. For they were our ensamples, and their history was written for our instruction. (1 Cor. x. 11.)

But inasmuch as the necessity of a preparatory work is denied by some, and the nature of it is still more misunder-

stood, therefore let us stop here a few minutes, and see what light the subject we have been upon will pour in upon these points.

The necessity of preparation for Christ must, without dispute, be granted; or we shall undermine the Jewish dispensation, which was by God designed for this very purpose. God intended that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into this benighted world; he intended it, in the days of Moses; but the world was not prepared for it then. Therefore, first he gives the law, appoints that to be a schoolmaster, and keeps up the school for near two thousand years; to prepare the way for the gospel revelation, that it might be the better understood, the more readily believed and embraced. God saw many preparatory lessons needed to be taught, and that the necessity was so great, as that it was best to delay the gospel dispensation, and set up a preparatory school, and appoint a preparatory schoolmaster. So that there needs no further proof of the necessity of preparation, in order to faith in Christ; as the Mosaic dispensation takes this for granted, and was chiefly designed to answer this end.* For, as if any man should boldly say, that mankind have no need of a Savior, it would wholly undermine and overthrow the gospel revelation; which takes it for granted that mankind do need a Savior, and just such a Savior as is provided; so, if any man should boldly say, that nothing is wanting to prepare a sinner for Christ, it would undermine and overthrow the Mosaic dispensation, which takes it for granted, that sinners did need preparation, and just such a preparation as that dispensation was suited to work.

Now, read through the whole law of Moses, with the history interspersed, in those sacred books, of God's dealings with the children of Israel those forty years in the wilderness; and it will appear that the whole is admirably suited to realize the Being and perfections of God; to show us exactly how he

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* *Obj.* "If every particular sinner needs the law to be his schoolmaster to bring him to Christ, as much as the Jewish nation did, why was the Jewish dispensation ever to be at an end? Why was it not to be perpetual?"

Ans. 1. The law of nature, requiring sinless perfection, on pain of eternal damnation, which was the chief part of the law given at Mount Sinai, all the advantages of which new edition, or republication of the law of nature, we still enjoy; I say, this law of nature, as it was in force previous to the Jewish dispensation, among all nations, so it is still. And by it all nations ever were, and still are, exposed to the everlasting wrath of God, as the Jews were by their law. Nor is there any escape but by Christ. Now, here is a perpetual schoolmaster. Rom. i. 18, and iii. 9, 19. Acts iv. 12.

2. But there is now no need to offer the blood of bulls and goats, or constantly to attend to and look upon any other of the Jewish shadows; because Christ, the substance, is come. Therefore the ceremonial law is to be no longer in force.

looks upon himself, and how he stands affected towards sin. "I AM THE LORD," he says, a hundred times; he speaks it with the majesty of a God, and he shows an infinite regard to his own honor, and expects all to love and worship him, to fear and obey him, on pain of death. If his anger waxes hot, behold, the earth opens her mouth, and swallows up hundreds, or the plague rages, to kill thousands in a moment. And if he is pleased to have mercy, and not execute all his wrath, it is like an absolute sovereign over criminals that have no claim. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Thus they are in the hands of a sovereign God. Meanwhile, the law teaches that no mortal can, on the account of his own goodness, be approved of God, unless he is perfectly holy in heart and life; and that the least defect merits and exposes to eternal damnation; and yet, at the same time, forbids a complaining thought, and obliges to a hearty approbation. Nor could the poor, guilty, helpless Jew, without a hearty approbation of the law, with any consistency, lay his hands on the head of the consecrated animal, and present it to die in his room; and yet this was the only door of hope; for "without shedding of blood, there was no remission." And now, it is plain what views and dispositions all this, effectually realized to the mind, and set home upon the heart, was suited to work. It would effectually awaken his conscience, and bring the Jew to feel what he was by nature, and by practice, in the sight of God, and compared with his law; and what he stood exposed unto, without any possible way of escape, but by the blood of atonement; which yet he could not, consistently, have recourse unto; unless first he heartily approved the law, in all its rigor, as strictly just. And herein, as in a glass, we may see the true nature of that preparation which is necessary in order to exercise faith in Christ.

And impartial reason approves it all. For is it fit the sinner should be pardoned before he sees and owns what he is, and wherein, and how much he has been to blame? Or is it fit the sinner should be pardoned till he clearly sees he deserves to be punished? Or is it fit a sinner should be pardoned, by God the Lawgiver, before he sees and feels the law is just, by which he stands condemned; so as to cease complaining; yea, so as actually to approve, justify, and acquiesce in it, as quite right and altogether equitable? Or can a sinner till then see any proper and rational ground for an atonement? or discern his need of Christ? or see the true beauty and glory of the gospel way of life, or heartily acquiesce in it?

Or may not these be laid down as maxims, near or quite self-evident: I must see wherein I have been to blame, and how much, before I can see wherein and how much I need a pardon. I must see I altogether deserve the threatened punishment, before I can see it altogether free grace to be delivered from it. I must see it reasonable, fit, and beautiful, that sin should be so punished as the law threatens, before I can see the law reasonable, fit, and beautiful, in threatening so to punish sin. I must see the law reasonable, fit, and beautiful, before I can be satisfied at heart, that it was ever best it should be executed upon the sinner, or upon Christ his surety. I must see it to be of infinite importance that God be honored, and sin discountenanced, before the severity of the law will appear beautiful, or the death of Christ needful, or the way of life through his blood glorious, or I heartily approve of the law, or cordially acquiesce in the gospel. I must heartily acquiesce in the gospel way of life, or I cannot sincerely, and from the heart, fall in with it.

Now, these, and each of these particulars, are essential to the exercise of faith in Christ, for pardon and justification. Nor need any thing further be added, in order to determine exactly the nature of that preparation which is necessary to the exercise of faith in Christ. Precisely how much of this is wrought in the true convert, previous to regeneration, and goes into the idea of what is called legal humiliation, and how much is consequent upon regeneration and divine light, and belongs to what is called evangelical humiliation, I shall not stand to determine.* But this I desire may be remembered, that there can be no exercise of faith in Christ for pardon and justification, by a new convert, or by an old saint, without these views and

* It may not be amiss to add here, that, previous to regeneration, while the sinner is without any seed of grace in his heart, (1 John iii. 9,) dead in sin, (Eph. ii. 1,) at enmity with God and his law, (Rom. viii. 7,) he may, through the law set home upon his conscience, by the Spirit of God, be made to see and own, as in the sight of God, 1. That there is no goodness in his heart, that he is quite dead in sin, an enemy to God and his law; 2. That he is, in himself, entirely helpless, absolutely lost and undone; 3. That God is not obliged to help or save him, for any thing he can do; 4. That he is in the hands of God, who is at liberty to have mercy on him, or not, as he pleases; 5. That it is a just and righteous thing in God to cast him off forever.

But it is after regeneration that other things come into view; such as, 1. The transcendent beauty and excellency of the divine nature. 2. The beauty of the law. 3. The glory of the gospel way of life. All which lay a foundation for, 4. A supreme love to God, a hearty approbation of the law, a cordial acquiescence in the gospel, an actual compliance with that way of life, &c. Besides that, now the justice of God in the damnation of the sinner, and the reasonableness of his acting as a sovereign in the salvation of those that are saved, appear quite in a new light. They appear even to be glorious. (2 Cor. iii. 7. Matt. xi. 25.)

tempers at least, for the substance of them.* They are so essential to justifying faith, that it cannot exist without them. Which, after all that has been said, seems too plain and evident to need any further proof. Therefore,

4. What has been said may serve to determine these following things, concerning the nature of justifying faith.

1. In general, it implies a hearty approbation of the law, and a hearty acquiescence in the gospel; as being suited to honor God and discountenance sin. And therefore, more particularly, —

2. It implies a conviction, and some realizing sense of the infinite greatness and glory of God; as also a supreme love to God, and regard to his honor. For otherwise we can never approve the law from the heart; nor will it ever appear beautiful, or agreeable, that God's honor is so much consulted and set by both in the law and gospel.

3. It implies regeneration; or that a new, spiritual, divine nature, taste, and relish, is communicated to us from God. For there is no principle in unrenewed nature, from which a man may have such a supreme regard to God and his honor, as from the heart to approve the law, in requiring sinless perfection on pain of eternal damnation. The law never appeared glorious

* There is the same necessity of these views and tempers, in order to the exercise of faith in Christ, at any particular season, through the course of a man's life, as there is at his first conversion. The same reason that makes them necessary to any act of faith, makes them necessary to every act of faith. Indeed, they become habitual to the true believer, who daily lives by faith on the Son of God. For it may be observed, that those legal terrors, and all those struggles and workings of the sinner's heart, while unregenerate, which are commonly experienced previous to a saving conversion, are left out of the above representation; as being, in a great measure, peculiar to that season, and not essential to any act of faith, but only naturally arising from the sinner's then present state and temper.

A true saint, yea, the most holy man on earth, according to law and strict justice, deserves damnation as much, yea, more than he did at his first conversion, considered merely as in himself. Not that he is at present so bad a man as once he was. No, by no means. But because his present goodness makes no amends for any of his sins committed before conversion or since. So that, if he was to be dealt with according to law strictly, without any relation to Christ, he must be accountable for all his sins before conversion, and for all sins since conversion. And the sins of a true convert deserve damnation, as well as the sins of the unconverted. And so, according to law, considered merely as in himself, he runs daily deeper into debt, and so stands in still greater need of Christ and free grace. For that Popish notion, that the goodness of a saint makes some amends in the sight of God for his sins, is inconsistent both with the law and with the gospel. For then a saint might possibly be so good, as to make full amends for all his sins, and so stand in no need of Christ. Yea, the church of Rome think, upon this same hypothesis, that some saints are so good as not only to make full amends to God for their own sins, but that, over and above, they have some to spare for their poor neighbors, who have not enough for themselves. And it is well if the hearts of some Protestants are not tinged with this Popish doctrine.

to an unregenerate heart, but every unregenerate heart is at enmity against it. (Rom. viii. 7.)

4. It implies a conviction, and some realizing sense of the infinite evil of sin, as it is against a God of infinite glory; for otherwise it cannot appear as an agreeable, amiable thing in God to punish it with eternal damnation. And so the law cannot be really approved of and liked.

5. It implies true repentance; in that we are thus heartily turned against sin to God, to be on his side, to approve and justify his law, and stand for his honor. For now the rebel is become, and has the heart of, a loyal subject. And so,

6. It implies a principle of new obedience.

7. It implies the seeds of every moral virtue and every Christian grace. For they are comprised in a hearty approbation of the law, and acquiescence in the gospel. And so,

8. It implies, virtually, a preparedness of heart to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ, and be true to him at all adventures — a character absolutely essential to every true Christian. (Luke xiv. 25—33.) And so, beyond all dispute,

9. Justifying faith is a holy act. And yet,

10. It implies that we have no dependence, no, not the least, on any goodness, of any kind, which is inherent in us, to recommend us to God's favor and acceptance. For,

11. It implies that we see and feel, that eternal damnation is, at that moment, our proper due, according to law and reason, according to strict and impartial justice.

12. It implies that we are so far from a disposition to think hard of God, and complain of his law as too severe, that, on the contrary, we are disposed to think well of God, and to think the law to be just what it should be, quite right, altogether right, just, and fair.

13. It implies that the law, although a ministration of death, appears to be glorious. For otherwise it cannot appear fit and beautiful, that the honor of it should be secured by the blood of the Son of God. And yet, unless this does appear fit and beautiful, the gospel way of life cannot be heartily acquiesced in.

14. And if the law, although a ministration of death, appears to be glorious, as it is suited to honor God and discountenance sin, the gospel will appear much more exceedingly glorious; as being wisely calculated, not only to answer these ends, to even better advantage than the law, but also to humble and save the sinner, and glorify grace. And therefore, in the exercise of faith, the gospel way of life by free grace through Jesus

Christ, will be admired, loved, esteemed, rejoiced in, as being full of the manifold wisdom of God; while we behold how Satan is disappointed, God exalted, the law honored, God's authority established, sin punished, the sinner humbled and saved, and grace glorified, all at once.

15. Justifying faith, these views and tempers being thus supposed and implied, consists more especially in a cordial compliance with the gospel way of life, by trusting in and entirely depending upon Jesus Christ; that Lamb of God, typically slain in daily sacrifices from the foundation of the world; who in the fulness of time bare our sins in his own body on the tree; died, the just for the unjust; being set forth, as the bullock of old, to be a propitiation for sin, that God might be just; and who is now ascended into heaven, to appear as our great High Priest, in the presence of God; and is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. So the pious Jew, with an humble and broken heart, laid his hands on the head of the bullock, or the goat, which he had presented before the Lord, to die in his room. The consecrated animal was slain, his blood sprinkled, his carcass burnt, and so atonement was made. Without shedding of blood there was no remission. Even so now we are justified by faith in Christ's blood, that is, by an entire trust, dependence, reliance on the atonement, merits, and mediation of Christ, for pardon and acceptance in the sight of God, and for eternal life. This faith in Christ's blood is St. Paul's definition of justifying faith, in Rom. iii. 25. And,

16. It implies a firm belief of the truth of the gospel. For otherwise a sinner so wide awake would not dare to venture his soul and eternal concerns thus wholly and entirely upon it, without any other dependence. And lastly,

17. It implies a supreme value for the favor of God above all the world; as this will naturally arise from a sense of his supreme dignity, greatness, and glory.

These things are all so easy to be understood, and so evidently true, from what has been already said, that they need neither further illustration nor further proof.

And thus, from the nature of the law, and of the gospel, — from the very frame and constitution of these two dispensations, — we learn the nature of the preparatory work, and the nature of saving faith. And nothing can be more satisfactory than to see these two things, which lay the foundation for all experimental religion, that is, for all real religion, thus growing up, as it were, out of the whole Bible, not resulting from here and there a detached sentence; but the natural and necessary con-

sequence of both dispensations, jointly viewed: and this joint view set in a divine light, by the great apostle of the Gentiles, before our eyes. And thus the religion of the heart answers exactly to the Bible; as face answers to face in a glass. As it is written, "We all beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image;" that is, beholding the glory of the Lord, as shining in the law; which, although a ministration of death, was glorious; and in the gospel, which much exceeds in glory, we are changed into the same image, are transformed into an exact resemblance, into a frame of heart that is exactly answerable. This image is begun at conversion, and it increases from glory to glory, by the continual influences of the Spirit of the Lord; who begins, carries on, and completes this glorious renovation.

And from these things it is evident that justifying faith is entirely of a different nature from any thing an unregenerate man experiences; who has neither these views, nor these tempers, which are implied in it, and properly belong to its essence. And accordingly, we find that he who saith, "He that believeth not shall be damned," saith also, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And particularly,

We may now, in the light of all these truths, see, as in the light of noonday, that for a man merely to believe that his sins are pardoned, and that God loves him, has in it nothing of the nature of justifying faith; but is altogether a different thing.

1. Justifying faith is a grace, it is a holy act. But there is nothing of the nature of holiness merely in believing my sins are forgiven. Yea, many a graceless sinner believes so.

2. Justifying faith is a saving grace. But salvation is nowhere promised to a man's firmly believing his sins are forgiven.

3. Justifying faith is wrought, and can be wrought, in the heart by none but the Spirit of God. But this belief may be the effect of a man's own presumption, or of the devil's delusion.

4. Justifying faith implies all the seeds of holiness in it, and so naturally lays a foundation for a holy life. But this belief, as there is no holiness in it, so it may naturally lay a foundation for a wicked life; as it tends to imbolden a graceless heart in sin.

5. Justifying faith implies regeneration, and cannot exist without it. But this belief may be without it. There is no necessity of regeneration in order to its existence.

6. Justifying faith implies a thorough conviction of sin. But a thorough conviction of sin would be a hinderance to this faith. If they saw how bad they were, they would not be so apt to believe their sins forgiven. Yea, thorough conviction would effectually prevent this belief, and keep them from this delusion, and show them their need of Christ indeed. Sudden terrors, without any deep conviction, are preparation enough for this belief. Yea, the Moravians, who think this belief true faith, are against any convictions, or terrors, as doing more hurt than good.

7. Justifying faith supposes that eternal damnation is seen to be justly due; nor can there be an act of faith without it. But deluded sinners may be strong in this belief, when quite secure in sin, and at the greatest remove from a sense of their desert of damnation.

8. Justifying faith supposes that the law is approved of and loved. But this belief may be in an Antinomian heart, that hates the law.

9. Justifying faith supposes the way of salvation by free grace, through Jesus Christ, is rightly understood, as it results herefrom. But a right understanding of the gospel way of life is not needful to this belief; as it does not take its rise from the gospel, but from a new revelation. Yea, a clear insight into the gospel way of life would do more hurt than good, as it would tend to convince them of their delusion.

10. Justifying faith supposes that we believe the gospel to be true. But that belief a heretic may have. Yea, a professed infidel may have it; a Turk, or a Jew, may as firmly believe that his sins are forgiven, as any Christian. And doubtless some of them do.

11. Justifying faith supposes that the gospel is heartily approved of and loved. But this belief is consistent with an habitual enmity to the gospel, as well as the law.

12. Justifying faith hath for its object Jesus Christ. But this belief has for its object no being; but only a supposed fact, namely, that my sins are forgiven.

13. Justifying faith is that by which we are justified. But this belief supposes the man was justified, that his sins were actually pardoned before he believed. Therefore,

14. As justifying faith is founded only on truth, so this belief is founded only on falsehood. And,

15. As justifying faith is founded only on truths revealed in the written word, so this belief is only on a supposed fact, nowhere revealed in the written word; yea, contrary to the written word, which teaches that before faith our sins are not

pardoned, but the wrath of God abideth on us. (John iii. 18, 36.)

16. Justifying faith is wrought by the Spirit of God, enlightening our minds, spiritually to understand the truths of the gospel already revealed in the written word. But this belief is begotten by an immediate revelation of a fact never revealed before; yea, of a fact not true.

17. Justifying faith attaches the heart to that whole system of truths revealed in the gospel. But this belief leaves the heart open to error, and inclines it to Antinomianism.

18. It is every sinner's duty, that hears the gospel, to believe on Christ with a justifying faith. But it is not every sinner's duty to believe his sins are forgiven.

19. An aversion to the exercise of true faith in Christ, is a sin in all cases. But a backwardness to believe his sins are forgiven, is no sin, in one who is unpardoned.

20. Justifying faith, the stronger it is, so much the better always. But this belief, the stronger it is in a self-deceived hypocrite, so much the worse.

21. Justifying faith works by love to God, as glorious and amiable in himself. But this belief works only by self-love. As the Israelites, at the Red Sea, were from self-love filled with joy, in a sense of their deliverance, without any true love to God in their hearts, so a man may be filled with joy, in a firm belief that his sins are forgiven, and yet be as destitute of true grace as were that ungodly generation to whom God sware in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest.

22. The true believer naturally makes holiness of heart and life his evidence of a good estate, as this is the natural fruit of true faith. But this belief naturally leads men to make, what they call the immediate witness of the Spirit, their only fundamental evidence; as all their faith, and all their religion, arises from it, and is entirely dependent on it; and disposes them to think sanctification a very dark, unsteady, uncertain evidence; their own religious frames being such.

23. The first and fundamental article of a true believer's creed, and that on which all his religion and hopes are built, is, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God. (Eph. ii. 20.) But the first and fundamental article of the other sort, and that on which all their religion and hopes are built, is, that the immediate discovery they have had of the love of God, and that their sins are pardoned, is from God. Shake them here, and you shake their very foundation. Destroy this belief, and you destroy all their religion and all their hopes, and leave them quite uncertain in every thing.

24. In justifying faith the believer is married to Christ, becomes one with him; and so is interested in all his benefits. But in this belief, they are persuaded that the benefits of Christ are theirs, without being ever married to him. To render this perfectly familiar to the weakest capacity, let me add, that the church, in Scripture, is called the bride, the Lamb's wife; and being thus united to Christ, is considered as being in Christ, and so interested in all his benefits. Now, there arises this question, What is the nature of that faith, whereby the soul is united to Christ? When a woman is married to a man, there is, first, the transaction itself, in and by which they are married; second, a consciousness of the transaction at that time; third, a remembrance of it afterwards; fourth, duties and privileges flowing from it. So it is in true faith. But what if a woman should take it in her head, without ever being married, to believe, first, such a man is my husband; second, he has paid all my debts and given me all his estate. *Objection.* No, but you are not married to him. *Answer.* Yes, I am. For marriage consists in believing he is my husband, and has paid all my debts. Might it not in this case be affirmed, — believing I am married, is not the whole essence of the marriage covenant, nor any part of it? So it is equally plain and certain, that believing that Christ is mine, and that my sins are pardoned, is not the whole essence of justifying faith, nor any part of it.* To proceed: —

5. From what has been said, the following case of conscience may be easily and safely resolved, namely, — A man is greatly at a loss about the state of his soul. He has been awakened, and has been comforted, and has frequently had something like communion with God; he makes conscience of all his ways; and yet for several reasons is at a great loss, whether what he has experienced be a common or saving work of the Spirit. He opens his case to his Christian friends; they are afraid to speak comfortably, lest it should settle him down on a false foundation, if all still be wrong. But they dare by

* Although it appears so clear a case, that justifying faith, and a mere belief that my sins are pardoned, are two distinct, different things, in their whole nature and effects; so that it seems strange how they should be taken for one and the same thing, unless where men are biased by their own corrupt experiences; yet still I have charity for some divines, who seem to think that justifying faith consists in such a belief, hoping they have a better faith in their hearts, than that which they describe in their books. But their being good men does not make this notion of faith ever the better; but, on the contrary, the danger of its doing mischief in the world is greatly increased, when it is espoused and recommended by men of great names. And therefore there is the greater reason, and the more need, so particularly to point out its difference from true faith.

no means speak discouraging; because, according to his account, his case is hopeful, although not clear. So they know not what to say.—Now, what is the best advice that can be given to a man in such a case?

Tell him, that although he is at a loss about his state, yet these three things he may be certain of; they are true, and may be depended upon; namely, he is a sinner; the gospel is true; and it is his duty to comply with it. Thus tenderly address him:—

Although you are conscientious in all your ways, yet you know you have been, and still are, a sinner. Your heart is not what it ought to be. Your temper towards God, Christ, and divine things, is not as it should be. Nor do you take that pains in the use of means, in prayer, meditation, keeping the heart, etc., as you might. You are to blame. You are wholly to blame. God is righteous in his present dealings with you. Yea, you deserve infinitely worse than all this, even to be sent immediately to hell. Wherefore, see it, own it, come down and lie in the dust at the foot of God and learn habitually to understand, realize, and approve of God's law as holy, just, and good.

And as it is true that you are a sinner, and deserve hell, so it is equally true that Christ has died for sinners, and God is ready, through him, to be reconciled to all that believe. And the truth of these glad tidings may be depended upon. And you cannot reasonably desire, that God should be reconciled to you in any other way than this, which is so perfectly adapted and suited to honor God, discountenance sin, humble the sinner, and glorify grace.

Now, whether you were ever savingly converted or not, yet it is equally your duty, in a sense that hell is your proper due, and that you are absolutely helpless and undone in yourself, and in a firm belief of the truth of the gospel, to apply to the great atonement of Christ, and to look to the free grace of God through him, for mercy to pardon, and grace to help, according to all your needs; and through Christ to devote and give up yourself to God, to love him, live to him, and to be forever his. And in this way your state may be cleared up, and your doubts removed.

Obj. But is there not danger that all this may settle him down on a false hope; if as yet he never was converted?

Ans. 1. If he never was converted, then he never yet heartily approved of the law, or really believed the gospel, or ever heartily complied with it. Therefore, putting him upon these things, will tend to convince him that he never did; for it will tend to show him that it is not in his heart to do it; and

consequently that there is no seed of grace there; but that he is quite dead in sin; and that therefore, unless he is born again, he shall never see the kingdom of God. I say it will tend to convince him of all this; and if after all he remains unconvinced, the fault will be his own.

2. If he has been savingly converted, then this method of dealing with him will be like pointing out the way to one lost in a wilderness. He likes the directions; he takes them, he hastens towards the road, he finds it, he remembers it; he rejoices, and takes better heed to keep the right path through the rest of his journey. For the true convert, although under great backslidings, has still the root of the matter in him; has it in his heart to justify the law, to be pleased with the gospel way of life, and to look to free grace through Jesus Christ for all things. Like Jonah in the belly of hell, when the weeds wrapped about his head, and he was ready to say, that he was cast out of God's sight; and his soul fainted within him. Then he remembered God, and looked again towards his holy temple, where God dwelt in the cloud of glory over the mercy-seat, under which the law was laid up in the ark, in the most holy place of the holy of holies, into which the high priest entered once a year with the blood of atonement. He looked hither; his former ideas of God revived; he remembered the Lord; and a sense of God, as there manifested, encouraged him to pray. He prayed, and God heard him, and delivered him out of all his distresses. And many a poor broken-hearted backslider has done in like manner, and found it good to draw near to the Lord. And thus the truth clearly held forth to the conscience, as it tends to kill the false hopes of a self-deceived hypocrite, so it tends to awaken and encourage the true saint to such exercises of grace as may be plainly discernible, and lay a foundation for a full assurance. To conclude: —

6. From what has been said, the true state of the Christless sinner appears in a clear light. For, while we view the sinner, as under a law that requires sinless perfection under pain of eternal damnation, we may easily see how the case stands with him. He is under the curse; he cannot obtain deliverance by any works of righteousness which he can do; he daily runs deeper into debt; he has no claim to any mercy, of any kind, temporal or spiritual; till he sees this to be his case, and heartily approves the law, by which he stands condemned, it is impossible he should see his need of Christ, or approve of, or fall in with, the way of salvation by him.

"He is under the curse." For as many as are of the works of the law, that is, of a disposition to trust in their own doings,

(as all are, until through the law, they are become dead to the law,) are under the curse. And that as really as if Christ had never died. For Christ will profit them nothing; will be of no effect to them, as it is written, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." Not that circumcision, simply and in itself, proved them to have no interest in Christ, (for Paul circumcised Timothy.) But if they were circumcised under a notion of recommending themselves to God by their duties, and obtaining the favor of God by their own righteousness, as was professedly the case with some of them, then it was a sufficient evidence of their temper, and of their state. They were *of the works of the law*, and so *under the curse*. (Gal. iii. 10.) Wherefore, let it be observed, that according to St. Paul, every self-righteous sinner is out of Christ, and every sinner out of Christ is under the curse. Being actually under a law which requires sinless perfection on pain of eternal damnation, he is by this law doomed to eternal destruction. For they are debtors to do the whole law; and therefore the curse takes hold of them, if they fail in any one point. Therefore, the Christless sinner cannot obtain deliverance by any works of righteousness which he can do; because nothing short of sinless perfection will entitle him to life. And it is too late for this. He has sinned already; and so is a lost creature; nor is there any hope, in his case, on account of any thing he can do; he is quite undone in himself; and his case hourly grows worse, for, he continually runs deeper into debt. As his sins are constantly multiplying, and his guilt increasing, and nothing done, in the least, to make amends, so he is constantly treasuring up wrath. (Rom. ii. 5.)

And he has no claim to any mercy of any kind, temporal or spiritual. He can claim nothing by law, unless he had fulfilled the law. And he can claim nothing by Christ, unless he were in Christ. And so, having no claim by law or gospel, he has no right to any thing. No right to his life. That is forfeited, and all the good things of this world are forfeited. And his soul is forfeited. Yea, he is actually under the sentence of condemnation. (John iii. 18.) It is true, he is reprieved; but it is only of God's sovereign pleasure. He dies, he drops into hell, when God pleases. He has no claim to the day of grace, or means of grace, or to any help from God. Hell is his due; he can claim nothing better. Hell is his present due, and he can claim no forbearance. In every respect, he lies at God's sovereign mercy.

When he sees this to be his case, and heartily approves the law by which he stands condemned; then, and not till then, is there any door of hope, or any way of escape. But he is shut up under sin; and bound down under wrath. (John iii. 36.) For until this, it is impossible he should understand, or believe, or approve of, or acquiesce in, the gospel way of life; or trust in Christ, as therein set forth.

Unless he thus heartily approves of the law, he cannot understand the gospel way of life. For while it does not appear best that sin should be so punished, he cannot understand why Christ died. He cannot understand what good end needed to be answered, or was answered, by his death. He cannot understand his need of him, or what it is to believe on him. It is all hid from him. It is all profound darkness. And all the seeds of infidelity are in his heart.

He cannot really believe the gospel to be from God. For while he does not see what ends need to be answered, it must appear incredible that the Son of God should become incarnate and die.

He cannot approve of the gospel. For this would imply a hearty approbation of the law. If it does not appear reasonable, fit, and beautiful, that he should be punished as the law threatens, it cannot appear reasonable, fit, and beautiful, that the Son of God should bear the curse in his stead. If the law is too severe, it ought to be repealed.

Therefore he cannot acquiesce, heartily acquiesce, in such a way of life. It does not suit his heart. He is not pleased with it.

And so he can have no genuine disposition to look to, and trust in Christ as set forth in the gospel, the whole plan being virtually disliked, while it does not appear best, and a thing desirable, that sin should be punished with so great severity. Therefore he must remain in profound darkness, shut up under sin, bound down under wrath, and in fearful expectations of everlasting destruction, until his uncircumcised heart is humbled.

But no sooner is the sinner brought heartily to approve the law, under a sense of the infinite greatness and glory of God, so as sincerely to say, Amen, to it; but every thing appears in a different light. The controversy is now at an end. The enmity is slain. The sinner, the rebel, is turned to be on God's side, is become a friend; and even rejoices to see God's honor so effectually secured. And the gospel is understood, believed, approved of, acquiesced in; yea, with all his heart he complies

with this way of life; trusting in Christ, as set forth to be a propitiation for sin, that God might be just, and yet justify and save sinners through him. In consequence of which, he is justified, hath peace with God, and rejoiceth in hope of the glory of God. And being now dead to sin, he can live no longer therein. For through the law he is dead to the law, that he might live to God. And he is married to Christ, that he might bring forth fruit to God. And being now a child of God, the spirit of adoption is sent forth into his heart, crying, Abba, Father. And so he follows God as a dear child; and from this day, and forward, is kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; and all from the good pleasure of God's will, to the praise of the glory of his grace. AMEN.

A TREATISE ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, THOUGHT IT NOT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD; BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, AND TOOK UPON HIM THE FORM OF A SERVANT, AND WAS MADE IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN.

Philippians ii. 6, 7.

HOWEVER clearly any may imagine, the chief principles of natural religion may be found out by the mere light of nature, yet all are agreed, that matters of pure revelation are to be learned only from the Holy Scriptures; and our sentiments, as to such points, are to be formed entirely from these sacred writings. Nor is it doubted but that we may safely believe what we find there plainly revealed, although the things are not fully understood. There are many things we know to be true, from experience and reason, in the natural and moral world, the manner of which we can by no means understand. The husbandman knows his grass and corn grow; the philosopher knows his soul and body are united; the divine knows that God has existed from eternity; but these things, and a thousand more as to the manner of them, are beyond their comprehension; yet their certainty is not for this reason at all called in question. So if some things, plainly revealed in the Bible, are, as to the manner of them, beyond our reach, it can be no objection against their truth. If we cannot conceive, for instance, what there is in the divine essence which may lay a just foundation for one true God, — and we know there is but one, — to speak and act as though he existed in three distinct persons, yet if we find this to be in fact the case from consulting God's holy word, we may as firmly believe it, as though we could fully understand it. And if we cannot conceive how the divine nature and the human should be united so as to constitute but one person, yet if we find, that, in fact, this is the case, there is an end to all doubt. For what God says may be as firmly believed as what our eyes see. Nor is there any more reason to doubt his word,

for want of a full understanding of the thing, than to doubt our eyesight on the same account. Let us now, then, quite willing to form our sentiments from the Holy Scriptures, apply to these sacred writings, and inquire into the true character of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And perhaps the words of our text may serve as a clew, to lead us into the true sense of what we find written in the Old and New Testaments on this important subject.

"Who being in the form of God." But when? Plainly, before he took upon him the form of a servant; before he appeared in the likeness of man; that is, before his incarnation. But where had St. Paul any accounts of Jesus Christ before his appearance in flesh? Did he exist, did he indeed exist, antecedent to his incarnation? Yes, says our blessed Savior, "Before Abraham was I am." In the writings of the Old Testament, no doubt, were the accounts referred to by the apostle; for "they were they which testified of him," as our Savior observed to the angry Jews in John v., who were enraged at his pretending to "be equal with God." (Ver. 18.) "Search the Scriptures," said he; to them I appeal to decide my true character, for "they are they which testify of me." In those sacred writings it was that he appeared in "the form of God;" and spake and acted as thinking it "not robbery to be equal with God." All which divine glory and splendor he laid aside, at the time of his incarnation; and instead of it, took on him "the form of a servant," and appeared in "the likeness of men." Wherefore let us take a view of our blessed Savior, as appearing, speaking, and acting in this twofold capacity — 1. "In the form of God;" 2. "In the form of a servant, and in the likeness of men;" that from the whole we may learn his true character.

1. Let us view our blessed Savior, when he appeared in the "form of God," and spake and acted as thinking it "not robbery to be equal with God."

And the first time he is brought into view, in the sacred writings, is in the first chapter of Genesis, as the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." For we are assured by one divinely inspired, that this God was the God who was "manifest in the flesh," even the very same being who "was made flesh and dwelt among us." For thus it is written: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." For he created not only this earth, and

this solar system; but by him were even "all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him." So that here he stands forth as the Creator of the whole universe. And his eternal power and Godhead are clearly to be seen by the things which he has made. (Rom. i. 20.) He is the Creator; and a higher character than this the most high God never assumes to himself in the sacred writings. For this is the style of supreme Deity. "Thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it: I am the Lord, and there is none else." And in heaven they worship the supreme God under this character. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." *

And, as Jesus Christ appears in the form of God in the first chapter of Genesis, calling universal nature out of nothing into existence, so likewise does he appear, and act, and speak, as thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, in all the grand dispensations of divine providence, from the calling of Abraham, and forward, through all the Jewish dispensation.

Turn to the third chapter of Exodus, at the beginning, and there you may see, "the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush,† and God called unto him out of the bush, and said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Now, who was this God that thus spake to Moses? It was

* That Christ was not a mere instrument which God used in the work of creation, as the Arians pretend, is plain from this, that the Scriptures not only teach, that Christ was the very supreme God himself that created all things, (Ps. cii. 25. Heb. i. 10,) but also that no instrument was used in that work. It was wrought immediately by God himself. As it is written, "God himself formed the earth and made it." This, all grant, was the supreme God; and this God was Jesus Christ, as will soon appear. "He alone spread out the heavens." Not by an instrument, but by himself alone, with his own hands. (Isa. xlv. 12.) The Scripture expressions the Arians urge to the contrary shall be explained presently.

† "Not a created angel, but the Angel of the covenant, Christ Jesus, who then, and ever was, God, and was to be man, and to be sent into the world in our flesh, as a messenger from God. And these temporary apparitions of his were presages or forerunners of his more solemn mission and coming, and therefore he is fitly called an Angel. That this Angel was no creature, plainly appears by the whole context, and especially by his saying, 'I am the Lord,' etc. The angels never speak that language in Scripture: but, 'I am sent from God,' and 'I am thy fellow-servant,' etc. And it is a vain pretence to say, that the angel, as God's ambassador, speaks in God's name and person. For what ambassador of any king in the world did ever speak thus, 'I am the King,' etc? Ministers are God's ambassadors; but if any of them should say, 'I am the Lord,' they would be guilty of blasphemy; and so would any created angel too, for the same reason." — *Poole in loc.*

plainly the God who had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and to whom they had built altars, and whom they had worshipped; to Jacob, in particular, as he was going to Padan-aram. "He dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and the angels of God (these were created angels) ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord (this was the supreme God) stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed," etc. And "Jacob called the name of that place Bethel," that is, the House of God. "And he anointed a pillar, and vowed a vow, saying, if God will be with me," etc., "then shall the Lord be my God." And when he was at Padan-aram, the same God appeared to him again, and is called the Angel of God. (Gen. xxxi.) "And the Angel of God spake to me in a dream." This was not a created angel; for he said, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowedst a vow unto me." * And to this God he afterwards built an altar, and he calls upon this God, this Angel, to bless the lads, (the two sons of Joseph,) a little before his death. Now, who was this sometimes called God, sometimes the Angel of God? It was, if we may give credit to his own declaration, "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac." And this was the God who now appeared and spake to Moses in the bush, and who afterwards gave the law from Mount Sinai. And of him, even of this very same God, David speaks in the sixty-eighth Psalm: "O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness, the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord; even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of

* God the Father is never called the angel of God. But the God of Bethel is called the Angel of God. Therefore the God of Bethel is not God the Father. The God of Bethel is the same who is called the Angel of the covenant in Mal. iii. 1. But that Angel of the covenant is Christ, as is plain from Mark i. 2. Therefore the God of Bethel was Christ. The God of Bethel was the God who appeared to Abraham, (Gen. xii. 1—7,) to Isaac, (Gen. xxvi. 24, 25,) to Jacob, (Gen. xxviii. 13, xxxi. 13,) to Moses, (Exod. iii. 2—6,) on Mount Sinai, (Exod. xx. 2,) and is usually called the God and King of Israel, through the Old Testament. But the God of Bethel was Jesus Christ. Therefore Jesus Christ was the God and King of Israel. If Jesus Christ was the God and King of Israel, then may St. Paul be justified in representing him as the Creator of the universe, (Col. i. 16,) and in applying to him, in his epistles, what was evidently spoken of the God and King of Israel in the sacred writings of the Old Testament. Compare Psal. lxviii. 18 with Eph. iv. 8, and Psal. cii. 25 with Heb. i. 10. And our blessed Savior may be justified in laying down his life, rather than to give up his claim. And there was more truth in the title set up over his head when on the cross, — Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, — than his crucifiers were aware of; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

God, the God of Israel. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men," etc. And now, who was this? Turn to the fourth chapter of Ephesians, and there an inspired apostle tells us, that it was Jesus Christ. It was he "who ascended up on high, and led captivity captive."

So that it was Jesus Christ, who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses in the burning bush, and on Mount Sinai. And he appeared in the form of God, and spake in the language of supreme Deity, as thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And what could he have said more than this; to set up thus for supreme God, and enjoin that none should be worshipped but himself?

And this God, who thus brought Israel out of Egypt, and gave the law from Mount Sinai, even he was "the King of the Jews," their civil chief. For their government was a theocracy, and God was their King, as King George is king of Great Britain. And therefore, when, in the days of Samuel, they desired to have a king from among themselves, like the rest of the nations, God said, "They have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." (See also 1 Sam. x. 18, 19.) This was in their hearts; for they were weary of God's government, and did not like to be in a state of such entire dependence on him, but wanted a king of their own. However, God did not give up his government over them, nor grant them a king, in the sense they desired; but only nominated and constituted one to be his vicegerent, to be his deputy, to govern for and under him, therefore called "the Lord's anointed," God himself still their King. Now, it was at Mount Sinai God became their King, and they covenanted and promised to be his loyal and obedient subjects. (Exod. xix. 3, 8.) But that God was Jesus Christ, as has been before proved. Therefore Jesus Christ was the King of the Jews, and they were his peculiar people. And to this St. John evidently alludes in these words: "He came to his own,"—his own people and nation, over whom he had reigned,—"he came unto his own, and his own received him not." Yea, look up, and view him on the cross, and read the superscription put over him, and that will declare who he is—Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. (See John xii. 15. Zech. ix. 9.)

And as their God was their king, their civil chief, so it was suitable he should have a palace built him, that he might dwell among them. And accordingly, by his appointment, the tabernacle was built in the wilderness. And there he dwelt, in the holy of holies, as their God and King, giving out laws and orders from above the mercy seat. In allusion to which, St. John, speaking of the same God, says, "The word was made flesh and tabernacled among us," — for so it is in the original. And this God who thus dwelt in their tabernacle, and whom they tempted and tried forty years in the wilderness, St. Paul testifies was Jesus Christ. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents." (See also Isa. lxiii. 9, compared with Exod. xxiii. 29; xxxiii. 14.)

Afterwards, in the days of Solomon, a temple was built, exceeding grand and glorious; however, not equal to his infinite greatness; for "the heaven and the heaven of heavens could not contain him." But yet in this temple he condescended to take up his abode, "in the cloud of glory which filled the house." And there he dwelt as God and King of the Jews.* In remembrance of which, and conscious to his own dignity, our Savior, in the days of his flesh, was filled with indignation to see the temple, once his holy dwelling-place, turned into a house of merchandise, and he drove out the people. And being questioned for this his conduct, he answered, "Destroy this temple," (speaking of his body,) "and in three days I will raise it up." As if he had said, "I am the God who once dwelt in your temple; now I dwell in this body; this is now my temple: destroy it, as I foresee you will, and in three days I will raise it from the dead; and thereby give you full proof who I be, and by what authority I do these things."

To Abraham he sometimes appeared as a man, (Gen. xviii. 1, 2;) to Moses, in a flame of fire in the bush; to all the host of Israel, in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, from the time they went out of Egypt till they came to Mount Sinai. On the mount he took up his abode till the tabernacle was built, and his appearance was as "devouring fire."

* Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, speaking to the God and King of Israel, said, "For thou, even thou, only knowest the hearts of all the children of men;" this being peculiar to the God of Israel. (1 Sam. xvi. 7. Psal. vii. 9. Jer. xi. 20; xvii. 10; xx. 12.) "And all the churches shall know that I am he," says our blessed Savior, — "that I am he which searcheth the reins and heart;" that is, that I am that very being, formerly known by the name of the God of Israel, to whom alone this character belonged. All the churches shall know it.

After the tabernacle was built, that became the place of his residence; and in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, he led the Israelites through all the wilderness, till he had brought them into the holy land; and the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, and there he dwelt till the days of Eli, when, for the wickedness of the children of Israel, he forsook Shiloh; as he afterwards did the temple of Solomon. And after the Babylonish captivity, this token of the divine presence was never more seen. But the pious Jews were assured by the last prophet under that dispensation, after the building of the second temple, that their God and King would return to their temple again. "The Lord whom ye seek" (longing for his presence as in former days) "shall suddenly come to his temple," where he used to dwell; "even the messenger" (or angel) "of the covenant." But when he "came unto his own, his own received him not," for his ancient glory was laid aside, and he appeared in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of men. Wherefore they put him to death for claiming to be the Son of God and King of the Jews; not knowing that he was the Lord of glory. (1 Cor. ii. 8. See Hag. ii. 7, 9.)

But if we want any further evidence that Jesus Christ was indeed the very God and King of Israel, let us turn to the sixth chapter of Isaiah, where we shall find the prophet, in a vision, seeing "the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up," as sole monarch of the universe, and worshipped by the heavenly hosts as supreme God, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; the whole earth is full of thy glory."* And then turn to the twelfth chapter of John, forty-first verse, and we shall find that this God was Jesus Christ. "These things" (namely, the things contained in Isa. vi. 9, 10,) "said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

And if we would see the same thing confirmed over again, let us read the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah throughout, where

* Holy, Holy, Holy, three times. This vision was a vision of one God in three persons — of God the Father, (Rom. xi. 8;) of God the Son, (John xii. 41;) of God the Holy Ghost, (Acts xxviii. 25;) the three who said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image," (Gen. i. 26;) whose name was pronounced three times in the Old Testament blessing; (Num. vi. 24, 25, 26;) as the three persons are distinctly mentioned in the New Testament baptism; (Matt. xxviii. 19;) and in the New Testament blessing; (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) And it is observed by an ancient Jewish writer, that, in several texts in the Hebrew Bible, God is called by three names. His words are as follows: "Thus it is said, (Exod. xx. 5,) I am the Lord thy God, a jealous God. Jehovah, Elohim, El, are the words used — three, answering to the Three by which the world was made. And thus the children of Gad and the children of Reuben say, (Josh. xxii. 22,) El, Elohim, Jehovah: El, Elohim, Jehovah, he knoweth. And why are these mentioned twice? Because by them the world was made, and because by them the law was given." Thus far the author of Midrash Tillim. See Bishop Kidder's "Demonstration of the Messiah," part iii. p. 84.

we have the supreme God, the God of Israel, saying, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me. — There is none besides me: I am the Lord, and there is none else. — Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. — I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens. — Thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens; God himself, that formed the earth and made it; I am the Lord, and there is none else. — There is no God else besides me. — Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." And if, after all this God-like language, this was Jesus Christ, St. Paul might well say, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" nor can we have a plainer comment on his words, nor can we be at a loss for their true meaning, for he could not have appeared more as supreme God, nor possibly spoken in more decisive language than this.* And yet nothing can be plainer than that St. Paul understood the God, speaking through the whole chapter, to be Jesus Christ. For those concluding words in the twenty-third verse, "I have sworn by myself, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear," he twice expressly applies to Jesus Christ; once in Rom. xiv. 10, 11, "It is written, Every knee shall bow to me;" and again, in Phil. ii. 10, 11, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow."

Yea, the inspired writers of the New Testament seem constantly to consider the God and King of Israel, who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, as the very same being, who afterwards dwelt in flesh, and was called Jesus Christ, from the liberty they take to apply to Jesus Christ, in their writings, what was so evidently spoken of the God and King of Israel, in the sacred writings of the Old Testament. To mention but two instances more. In all the one hundred and fifty Psalms, there are none which seem more plainly to speak of the supreme God than the ninety-seventh and one hundred and second. And yet both these are considered in the New Testament as speaking of Christ, and accordingly are applied to him. The ninety-seventh Psalm begins with, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice:" and an inspired

* The God that speaks in this chapter, is the God who created the universe; the God who was known by the name of "The God of Israel," that is, the God who brought Israel out of Egypt, and led them through the wilderness, and the God who delivered the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity, (ver. 13.) And he affirms over and over, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is none besides me, there is none besides me." Of this very same God we read, Isa. xl. 3, applied to Christ, Matt. iii. 3; and Isa. lii. 7, applied to Christ, Rom. x. 15, and Isa. xl. 10, 11, applied to Christ, John x. 11; and Isa. xli. 4, xliv. 6, xlviii. 12, applied to Christ, Rev. i. 17, xxii. 13.

writer considers it as a representation of the glorious reign of the Messiah. For, says he, "when he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him;" referring to the seventh verse of the ninety-seventh Psalm, "Worship him, all ye gods." And in the one hundred and second Psalm, speaking of the supreme God, the Psalmist says, "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Which is expressly applied to Jesus Christ in Heb. i. 10, 11, 12.*

Wherefore, from what has been said, it is natural to observe,

1. That the God and King of Israel we read of in the Old Testament, is the very same being who afterwards became incarnate, and is called by the name of Jesus Christ in the New Testament;† that is, Jesus of Nazareth was really the King of the Jews. So certain as the writers of the New Testament were divinely inspired, so certainly may this be depended upon. Therefore,

2. It is beyond us to imagine any evidences of the divinity of Christ, which could possibly have been given, more clear and striking than those which have been already given. In the beginning he created the heaven and the earth; even all things were created by him and for him. And he was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;

* There are comparatively but few passages in the Old Testament, in which we may be certain, that it is God the Father, who speaks, or is spoken of. There are but few passages which could not have been applied to Christ with as much apparent justice as those already applied to him by the inspired writers of the New Testament. If Christ was not the God and King of Israel, how can they be justified in what they have done? But if he was, the consequence is plain.

† "But what difference is there, then, between God the Father and God the Son?" I answer, They are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. John x. 30, "I and my Father are one," compared with John xiv. 7, 8, 9, 10. And yet when we are baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and observe how in the gospel dispensation the Father sustains the dignity, and stands for the rights of the Godhead, (Rom. iii. 25,) the Son becomes incarnate, and is set forth to be a propitiation for sin, and, the Holy Spirit enlightens and sanctifies sinners, — I say, when we observe these representations in the sacred records, it becomes evident, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, although they are but one God, plainly act as though they were three distinct persons. And if our reason cannot find out how they are three, and yet but one; and if God has not thought it needful to instruct us in this point; yet so far as is revealed, so far we may believe; and that with a faith sufficiently distinct to lay a foundation for practice. The believer may now, through the mediation of the Son, have access, by the assistance of the Spirit, to the Father. (Eph. ii. 18.)

whom they worshipped, and to whom they built altars. He appeared to Moses in the burning bush as the supreme God, and spake the language of supreme Deity from Mount Sinai. In the tabernacle and temple he dwelt in the form of God, and always spake as thinking it no robbery to be equal with God. To Isaiah he appeared as the monarch of the universe, and was worshipped by the heavenly hosts as such. And often he repeats it, "I am the Lord, and there is none else, and beside me there is no God;" and therefore swears by himself, there being no greater to swear by, that every knee shall bow to him. Had he been truly and indeed by nature supreme God, what could he have done, or what could he have said, to have it made more manifest?

3. If, after all, he was not by nature God, but a being infinitely inferior; not the Creator, but a creature; the Jewish dispensation, which was professedly designed to establish the worship of the one true God, in opposition to all others, was really calculated to establish idolatry, for aught I can see, and that forever. For he appeared in the form of God, and was taken to be supreme God, and enacted it as the first and chief of all his laws, that no God should be worshipped but himself. So that to deny his divinity, is to say, that the God of the Hebrews was an impostor, and to declare Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all their prophets, to be deluded idolaters; for him they all believed to be supreme God, and him they worshipped as such.

4. But on the other hand, granting the Old and New Testaments to be divinely inspired, we may behold the manifold wisdom of God in laying out his grand plan as he has done. To God all his works were known long before the foundation of the world. And among other things, the incarnation, and the death of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, were full in the divine view. Now, what methods should be taken to render mankind, and the whole intellectual system, sensible of the infinite dignity of Him who died on the cross? "Go," says the eternal Father to his Son, — "go, first create the world for which thou art to die, and the whole system over which thou art to reign, that how deep soever thine abasement may be, thine eternal power and Godhead may be to be clearly seen by the things thou hast made. — Go, appear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the form of God, and speak to Moses, and on Mount Sinai, as plainly thinking it to be no robbery to be equal with God, and dwell in their tabernacle and temple, and reign as God and King among them; that when, in the fulness of time, thou shalt appear in the form of a servant and in the

likeness of a man, and bleed and die on the cross, thy true character may still be known; that when I come to perform this greatest of all my works, to give my only-begotten Son to die for the world, it may be understood, by frail mortals, what it is I have done." *

God foresaw his appearing in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of men, would, unless there was some method taken to hinder it, induce mankind to think him but a mere man; and so prevent their seeing into the sublime nature and glory of the Christian dispensation. In his infinite wisdom, therefore, he appointed him such works to do, previous to his incarnation, as might effectually determine his true character. At first, his disciples themselves hardly believed him to be supreme God, or that he was to die to make atonement for the sins of the world; for their eyes were not yet opened to understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament, in which both these points were set in the strongest light. The very night before he suffered, it is plain his disciples had but a feeble sense of his supreme Godhead. He had before said, that he and his Father were one, but they did not fully understand him. He now says, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him." But they hardly knew what he meant. Therefore Philip, being one of them, says, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?

* That the Son was employed by the Father as his agent to create the universe, seems to be implied in that manner of speaking in Eph. iii. 9, "Who created all things by Jesus Christ," and in Heb. i. 2, "By whom he made the worlds." And that his creating the world manifests him to be possessed of eternal power and Godhead, is plain from Rom. i. 20. And that the work of creation, and his other works recorded in the Old Testament, were designed to ascertain his true character, as being by nature God, in the view of frail mortals, notwithstanding the greatness of his intended abasement, is evident from the inspired writings of the New Testament; as they abundantly improve them to this purpose. Other kinds of beings God has employed in his dealings with a fallen world, namely, angels and men. And proper care has always been taken to ascertain their true character, as mere creatures, in the sacred writings. So Moses appears but a mere man, whatever high titles he had sometimes given him. And the angel employed by Christ to communicate to St. John the wonderful and glorious visions and revelations he had in the Isle of Patmos, appears to be but a mere creature, (Rev. xxii. 9,) and he made conscience of informing St. John in his true character. But Christ appears in the form of God, and speaks and acts as thinking himself supreme God, through a long period of three or four thousand years. And granting him to be really such, there could not have been a better method to determine his true character to our view, and prevent our entertaining too low thoughts of him, on account of his appearing in the form of a servant, and in the likeness of a man. If now we cannot give credit to his words, when he says, "I and my Father are one," yet surely we may to his works, while we view him as the Creator of the universe and as the God and King of the Jews.

He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" But when afterwards their eyes were opened to understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and in all those sacred pages to behold him in the form of God, speaking and acting as supreme Deity, now their faith was fully confirmed. Indeed, in the days of his abasement, while his divinity was so much concealed, his divine glory at times shone into their hearts, and they "beheld his glory, (for instance, on the mount, Matt. xvii.,) as the glory of the only-begotten Son of God." And sometimes, under a divine influence, they cried out, "Thou art the Son of the living God." But in general their sense of his divinity was but feeble; so that after his death they even doubted his being the true Messiah. (Mark xvi. 14.) They knew not what to make of things. (Luke xxiv.) But after the days of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit, who inspired the writings of the Old Testament, was so plentifully poured out upon them, they never appear to doubt again; but as in their writings, so no doubt in their preachings, they take the utmost liberty to apply passages in the Old Testament, evidently spoken of the supreme God, the Creator of the universe, the King of Israel, to Jesus Christ; and without scruple call him, Immanuel, God, the true God, God manifest in the flesh, yea, God over all, blessed forever.*

It is written, in Isa. ix. 6, "His name shall be called Wonderful." And indeed, of all things that ever happened in the whole intelligent system, this is the most astonishing, that the eternal God, who created the universe, should become incarnate, and die on the cross; that the babe in the manger was "the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Creator of the ends of the earth!" He looked like another child; he grew in stature like another child; and when grown, he appeared in fashion as a man; his ancient glory all laid aside; to appearance, a man of sorrow, despised, condemned, hated, ridiculed, the laughing-stock of many in town and country, and those the most rich and honorable; at last, crucified as a malefactor. And was this

* And if his disciples had so little sense of his true character, as supreme God, is it in the least credible, that the man spoken of in Matt. xix. 16, who called him good Master, had so much as one thought of his supreme Godhead? Far from it, no doubt. It does not appear that he thought him to be the Messiah. But our Savior knew what he himself was, and pitied the man, and said, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one — God." As if he had said, "You call me good. Do you know who I be, or what you say? There is none good but God. Do you think I am God?" — words well contrived to put him on a further inquiry into our Savior's true character.

the eternal Jehovah! the God of the whole universe! this mean man! this crucified criminal! Well might his name be called Wonderful. O the manifold wisdom of God, in appointing his Son, previous to his incarnation, to appear in the form of God, and speak and act as thinking it no robbery to be supreme God, through a period of three or four thousand years, as preparatory and introductory to this astonishing abasement; that there might be sufficient external evidence, with certainty, to determine his true character, when appearing in circumstances so infinitely below his real dignity! But it is time to proceed, as was proposed,

II. To take a view of our blessed Savior "in the form of a servant, — in the likeness of men."

As man, he had a human body, which, from the smallness of an infant, grew up into the stature of a man; and a human soul, in all respects like ours, sin only excepted. (Heb. ii. 16, 17.) As man, God was his Father; even as he is the Father of the whole creation in general, and as he is the Father of all good men in particular; and in a still more eminent sense. And God was his God. As he said, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." As man, he was dependent on God, and prayed to him, and praised him. As man, he had no ability to work miracles: but the Father, saith he, "that dwelleth in me, he doth the works." As man, he loved the young man in the gospel for his humane disposition and respectful behavior. He groaned at his friend Lazarus' grave. He wept over Jerusalem; and was in an agony and prayed in the garden; and cried on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

As man, he grew in knowledge and wisdom, and in favor with God and man, and yet was at an infinite remove from absolute omniscience: yea, he did not so much as know when the day of judgment would be. The Deity, who was the Father* of the man Christ Jesus, how intimately soever united

* By the Father is sometimes meant the first person in the Trinity, as in Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 John v. 7. But at other times, is plainly meant the Deity, without reference to any distinction of persons, as in John iv. 23, 24; 1 John ii. 15, etc.

Obj. "But if Jesus Christ was God and man, in one person, how could that one person say, that he knew not the day of judgment? for if he did not know as man, yet he did, as he was God."

Ans. It was usual for our Savior to speak after this manner: "I lay down my life for the sheep." Now, how could that one person say, "I lay down my life"? Was the divine nature to die? and yet was not that nature himself? Certainly it was. For he adds, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Certainly the human nature had not power to raise itself from the dead. So John viii. 58, "Before Abraham was, I am." But how

to him, had never imparted to him the knowledge of this thing. The union was such as that he might justly be named Immanuel, (Matt. i. 23;) yet the natures remained distinct. And the human nature was not conscious to the ideas of the divine, only as they were imparted. This was the case when he dwelt on earth, notwithstanding his personal union to the second person in the Trinity; and it is still the case now he is in heaven, notwithstanding his exaltation and glory; he knows not the secrets of the Divinity any further than they are communicated to him. Therefore we have that expression in Rev. i. 1, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." And doubtless it is simply impossible, that any creature should be conscious to the ideas of the Divinity, as a man is conscious to the thoughts of his own heart, by immediate intuition. But he was not only a man, but "also took on him the form of a servant," and as such, he received all his power and authority from his Father, as he constantly declares, in all his instructions. For he came not "of himself," nor to do "his own will," nor to seek "his own glory;" but his Father sent him; and he spake and acted altogether as his servant, and as such, "his Father was greater than he." *

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could that be true? for, as man, he was short of fifty years old. So again, (John iii. 13,) "Even the Son of man, which is in heaven." Certainly the human nature of Christ was not then, nor ever had been, in heaven. And if, consistent with truth, he might say, that the Son of man is in heaven, although the human nature never was there, he might as well say, the Son knoweth not, although the divine nature did know. The manner of speaking, when honestly attended to, instead of tending to mislead us, tends to set the very truth in a striking light, namely, that he was *very God* and *very man*. And agreeable hereto we may observe, that the same person that says, "not the Son, but the Father only," in Mark xiii. 32, says also, "I and my Father are one." And, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." — "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

N. B. In this last text, he, distinguishing between his human and divine natures, calls his divine nature the Father. Therefore, when he says, "Not the Son, but the Father only," the sense is plain. Nor is it any objection against this, that Christ speaks of the Father as distinct from himself in both these instances. For in the same discourse, (Mark xiii. 19,) he speaks of God the Creator as one distinct from himself. Yet himself was the God that created all things. However, himself was a creature too. (See also John vi. 42.)

* All the power and authority by which the Mediator acts, in the whole of his mediatorial work, is derived from the Father. He acts wholly as his Father's vicegerent, and by his commission. "He can do nothing of himself." (John v. 19.) He gives gifts to his church, (Eph. iv. 8. Psal. lxviii. 18;) sends the Holy Spirit, (John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26;) subdues all enemies, (Rev. xix. 11—21. 1 Cor. xv. 27;) raises the dead, (John v. 21, 25, 26,) and judges the world, wholly by this derived authority. And "it hath pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell in him." And these texts here referred to, instead of proving that he is not by nature God, as the Arians suppose, do only prove, that he, who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, really "took on him the form of a servant." All mere creatures are (like those born in a state of servitude) God's servants from their very first existence. But he

And a principal command he had received of his Father was, to lay down his life for his sheep. And such was his regard to his Father's honor, and to the salvation of sinners, that he was obedient, even to the death of the cross. Wherefore his Father loved him, and in testimony of his love, highly exalted him, and, as Mediator, set him at the head of the universe, and made him heir of all things, (for, as God, he was by an underived right, Lord of all things before, Isa. vi. 1,) and gave him a name above every name, that to the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess, that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; nothing being more to the glory of God the Father, than so highly to exalt a servant, who had shown so great regard to his honor, and to the honor of his law, and government, and sacred authority; and nothing being more to the glory of God the Father, than that the whole universe should bow to the name of his great Vicegerent, exalted to sit at his own right hand, as a reward of his fidelity to his Father, while acting in the form of a servant.*

Among all the servants of God, none ever did so much to the glory of God, nor ever showed such love to righteousness and hatred of iniquity, as he, and none ever received so great a reward. He was anointed with oil of gladness above his fellows; above all his fellow-servants, whether angels or men; and however faithful to him that appointed them, none ever were, or ever will be, exalted to so great glory.

For he sits at the head of the universe, even at "the Father's right hand; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion." And here, as his Father's Vicegerent, God-man, Mediator, King, he is to reign till all his enemies are put under his feet, till the final judgment is over, and all the affairs of an apostate world are settled. And then he will, in testimony that he has acted all as his Father's servant, resign this delegated authority. And "God shall be all in all." As his Father's servant, he received this authority, to destroy the works of the

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originally was not God's servant. He was at his own disposal, and became a servant by a voluntary act. "He took on him the form of a servant." It is no condescension for the most exalted angel in heaven to be God's servant; but it was infinite condescension for the Son of God to become a servant to his Father.

* None will think that it would be to the honor of the supreme God, to give too high a seat, and too much honor, to any of his servants. But methinks this was too much honor to be paid to a mere creature; for it is the very honor which the supreme God swears shall be paid to himself. (Isa. xlv. 23.) And it is a maxim with the supreme God, "not to give his glory to another." But that saying of our blessed Savior in John x. 30, removes the difficulty at once. "I and my Father are one." So now we may "honor the Son even as we honor the Father." And it is as God would have it. It is to "the glory of God the Father."

devil, to bring good out of all the evil sin had introduced, and put an end to all the disorder and confusion in the intellectual system, consequent on the apostasy of angels and men; and having finished his work, he resigns the kingdom to the Father, the first person in the ever-blessed Trinity, to whom, as such, the government of the world properly belongs, and he shall take the kingdom, and reign over the universe forever and ever. And Jesus Christ himself, as Mediator, shall be subject to him, as is suitable, that the Godhead only may be exalted, and as it really is, so it may appear to be, all in all. For while the Father reigns, the whole Godhead reigns in him. So that, while the Son, as Mediator, resigns the kingdom to him, yet, as God, he reigns in him, and forever will. But his mediatorial government he resigns, even that delegated authority, whereby, as his Father's servant, he had ruled the universe, in the capacity of God-man, Mediator, King; having finished the work which he was empowered and authorized to do.*

As God-man Mediator, in two distinct natures, yet but one person, he was his Father's servant. As such he became obedient unto the death. Therefore the church is said to be redeemed with the blood of God. (Acts xx. 28.) And God is said to have laid down his life for us. (1 John iii. 16.) And, as such, he ascended to heaven and led captivity captive; and therefore St. Paul applies what is spoken of God in Ps. lxviii. 18, to him, in Eph. iv. 8. And, as such, he was exalted to the highest glory in heaven, and every knee ordered to bow to him; and so what is spoken of God in Isa. xlv. 23, is applied to him in Phil. ii. 10. For he was God as well as man, God-man, one person; and as God's servant, in the great work of redemption, he was obedient unto death, and as God's servant, was rewarded with this high exaltation.

Thus stands the character of Jesus Christ in the sacred

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* *Obj.* "But it is written, that Christ 'shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.' — 'His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.' — 'His throne is forever and ever.' — And 'he shall reign forever and ever.'"

Ans. Christ, at present, as Mediator, reigns over the whole universe. All beings, the Father only excepted, are under his authority. (1 Cor. xv. 27.) But when he has finished the work for which he is invested with this universal authority, he will resign this universal commission, and the Father take the government of the universe. However, he will, as Mediator, still "reign over the house of Jacob, his redeemed ones; forever." It is needful now, that angels should be under him, to be his ministering spirits; and that he should have full authority over earth and hell, for the good and safety of his church. But then the Mediator will need the angels no longer for ministering spirits, to minister to the heirs of salvation, who will be all safe in heaven. Nor will he have any thing more to do with wicked men and devils. As for the wicked, their day of grace will be over; and neither they nor the devils can do any more mischief. Having shut them up in hell, he will give up the keys to his Father.

writings of the Old and New Testaments; all which cannot be better summed up than in the words of the apostle, who seems to have had all these things in his view: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" in whose name he administers his mediatorial kingdom, and to whose honor he professedly refers it.

And thus we have, as was proposed, taken a view of Jesus Christ; first, as being in the form of God, and speaking and acting as thinking it no robbery to be equal with God; and then, as having taken upon him the form of a servant, appearing in the likeness of men; and have seen the method infinite wisdom took to ascertain his true character, that the greatness of his abasement might not mislead frail mortals, nor raise one suspicious thought of the infinite dignity of his person, as our great Immanuel. And now, therefore,

1. What an infinite condescension was it in the eternal God, the Creator of the universe, who had appeared in the form of God, and spake and acted as thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, through a long period of three or four thousand years, to lay aside all his glory, and from being worshipped as supreme God, to become of no reputation, and even take upon him the form of a servant and the likeness of men! Well might St. Paul urge this example, as a powerful inducement, on all the disciples of Christ, to be full of love and condescension towards one another.*

But,

2. How ungrateful, yea, how impious would it be in us to take occasion from his appearing in the form of a servant, and in

* But how does his argument lose all its force, as the Arians interpret and understand the apostle's words! "Who, being in the form of God, by being his minister and representative, did not proudly and vainly assume to be equal with God," etc. (Thus Chubb.) For what condescension was it for a mere creature, as they say he was, not to aspire after supreme Godhead? Can a mere creature be looked upon as very condescending, because he is not as proud as Satan himself? And can we suppose the inspired apostle would argue thus: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Jesus Christ, who, being but a mere creature, was so very condescending, as not to pretend to be equal with God." And yet this must be his argument, as they interpret his words.

the likeness of men, which was for our sakes,—to take occasion, I say, from this to call his divinity into question. Especially, now, since we are so plainly informed, by the Holy Ghost, who inspired the writers of the New Testament, that he is the very same God who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth, and appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses and Isaiah, and who was believed to be the supreme God, and worshipped as such by all the patriarchs and prophets, only because he has laid aside his God-like form, and taken the form of a servant; and instead of speaking like a God from Mount Sinai, appears and speaks like a man; that we should immediately doubt his divinity, and look upon him as a mere man, when yet all this abasement was for our sakes! How must He look upon it! How must He resent it!

Just thus did the wicked Jews; yet we are more to blame than they, because we have more light and better advantages to form a right judgment of his true character: I say, just thus did the wicked Jews, when they charged him with blasphemy, for saying, "I and my Father are one." "Thou," say they, "being a man, makest thyself God." Here was his crime, and here was their proof. He had, upon a like occasion, some time ago, referred them to the Scriptures of the Old Testament in general, to decide his true character, (John v. 18, 39,) but to little purpose. He now therefore only refers them to a particular passage in the 82d Psalm, saying, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods." And if he called them gods, that is, if the types, which were shadows, were called gods, the antitype, which is the substance, must be real God. If they had the name, he must have the thing. For the Scripture cannot, in any particular, be broken. Not only all the prophecies, but also all the types of the Messiah, must be verified in him. You have no reason therefore to charge the Messiah with blasphemy, for claiming to be the Son of God.* And indeed, notwithstanding the meanness of my appearance in your eyes, while

* It is worthy our attention, that, in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, the chief rulers in Israel are called gods, (Exod. xxviii. 28,) and children of the Most High, (Ps. lxxxii. 6;) which doubtless was, because they were designed to be types of Christ, who was by nature God, and the very Son of God.

For, as has been before observed, God himself was the King of the Jews. As it is written, "The Lord your God was your King." (1 Sam. xii. 12.) And this God was Jesus Christ, as has been before proved. Then he appeared in the form of God. And that there might be a shadow of the state he was afterwards to be in, when in the form of a servant, acting as his Father's delegate, he constituted the Jewish rulers to be his delegates then. He anointed and authorized them, (1 Sam. x. 1; xvi. 12, 13,) as he was to be anointed by his Father, and sanctified and sent into the world, and to receive all his authority from him. They were called the Lord's anointed, the Lord's Messiah, as it is in the original, as that was the name by which he was to be known. He was to be called

you behold me in the likeness of men, yet my works, which you also see, evidence my divinity. If you cannot give credit to my words, yet surely you may to the works wrought by me; which evidently are not the works of a mere man. And they are a sufficient proof that the Father is in me, and I in him; that is, that "I and my Father are one." So spake the incarnate God, who of old dwelt in their tabernacle, from whence the word of God used to come forth to their chief rulers, when they came to inquire of the Lord. Then he was their God, and King, and Oracle. Now all his glory is laid aside. He is of no reputation. Nor can any thing he says, nor all the mighty works he had wrought, assuage their anger, or keep their hands from violence. He is obliged to leave the temple where he was, and be gone. However, the matter did not end here. For when they arraigned him before the high priest, they renew the charge of blasphemy, and pronounce him worthy of death. Nor did Pilate know how to express the crime for which he was put to death, better than in this title put on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." So that his claiming to be the Son of God and King of the Jews, cost him his life.

And shall we crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame, and justify all the conduct of the Jews towards him, by saying,

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the Christ, that is, the Anointed, the Messiah; for all are the same name, and mean the same thing. (John i. 41.) And they were directed from time to time by the word of the Lord, which came to them when they went to inquire of the Lord. (1 Sam. xiv. 18, 19; xxviii. 6; xxx. 7, 8. 2 Sam. ii. 1.) And as gods they sat upon the throne of the Lord, and reigned over the kingdom of the Lord. (1 Chron. xxix. 23. 2 Chron. xiii. 8.) In all which, they were types of the Messiah, who in the fulness of time was to become incarnate, to be anointed, sanctified, and sent into the world, to act in all things according to his Father's commandment, as his Father's delegate, and as such to be exalted to sit on his throne in heaven, at the head of the creation, to govern the church and the world. And these types were named gods, and called the children of the Most High; as the great antitype was the Son of God, and one with his Father. They were shadows; he is the substance. They were called gods; he is really God. So that this is the force of our Savior's argument: What the types were in name and shadow, that the antitype must be in reality and substance; for the Scriptures cannot be broken. But these types were gods in name and shadow; therefore the Messiah, who is the antitype, must be God in reality and substance. Thus in the Jewish sacrifices there was a shadow of substitution, and they were called atonements; so in Jesus Christ there was a real substitution, and a real atonement. (See my sermon on Gal. iii. 24.) And indeed, the Messiah must be in reality all that which the types were in name and show, otherwise the Scripture would not be accomplished and verified.

If any therefore should say, that as the Jewish kings were gods by office, so Christ was only a God by office; as they only had the shadow of divinity, so he only has the shadow of divinity; I answer, Then the Scripture is broken; the types are not accomplished in the antitype. It is all a shadow still. The substance is not come. And the prophetic prayer with which the 82d Psalm concludes, is never to be answered: "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations." For it is not a God, but a mere creature, that is to have

he was indeed but a man? For if so, it was blasphemy indeed to pretend to be supreme God. And we know the blasphemer deserved to die, according to the law of Moses.

And what is there to tempt us to this impious and ungrateful deed? Not any thing our blessed Savior ever said, or ever did: for he always spake and acted in character — as God, when in the form of God; as man, when in the likeness of men; as a servant, when in the form of a servant; as our exalted Mediator, now at the right hand of the Father; from whom he, as Mediator, has received all his power; and to whom, when he has finished his work, he will, as Mediator, resign his delegated authority. Nor can any thing he ever said, or any thing he ever did, fairly construed, once tempt us to doubt his being by nature supreme God, after such clear evidences of his divinity have been given us. Nor can I think what should induce us to doubt his divinity, unless we secretly imagine there was no need that the Creator of the universe should become incarnate and die on the cross for us. We were not so bad, nor was sin so great an evil, as to make such an atonement needful. And if this be at the bottom, let us honestly say so, that the world may know the true ground of our infidelity, and see it all summed up in a few words: "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

"the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession." And if his divinity is but a shadow, so is his atonement. The true atonement is not come. The types are not fulfilled. The Scripture is broken, and we are yet in our sins. For the blood of one mere creature can no more make a real atonement than the blood of another mere creature. The blood of a bull or a goat, and the blood of a mere man, are equally at an infinite remove from any virtue to make a proper atonement for sin. All that has been done is a mere shadow. There is no substance in it. And so the Scripture is broken; and the truth of divine revelation, in general, overthrown. For if any one thing held forth in a type or a prophecy should fail of accomplishment, the truth of that whole revelation in which that type or prophecy is contained, would be overthrown. So that, granting the Old Testament to be divinely inspired, our Savior's argument amounts to a strict demonstration.

The sense the Arians give to the words is this: "I and my Father are one, that is, engaged in the same design. And when the Jews, through mistake, thought he meant that he was one with God, he answers, I do not mean I am God by nature, but only God by office." Query 1. What was this answer to the purpose? 2. Why did not he expressly tell them, that he only meant he was engaged in the same design with his Father, as all other good men are? This would have cleared him from the odious character of a blasphemer, and prevented their taking up stones again to stone him. And if indeed he was but a man, all must own it was his duty to have spoken out in as plain a manner as Paul and Barnabas did, when the people of Lystra took them for gods, and were about to offer sacrifice to them. But to suffer himself to pass for a blasphemer now, and soon after to be pronounced worthy of death for blasphemy, and yet never clear up the matter, but leave his disciples, after him, to follow his example, and call him "God, the true God, God blessed forever, by whom and for whom all things were created," when he was as really a mere creature as you and I, is what can never be accounted for.

This was the very case with the unbelieving Jews, and the chief reason of their rejecting Christianity. They had a high opinion of their own goodness; nor could they conceive why they might not be accepted with God on the foot of their own righteousness. And therefore the gospel way of salvation, through the mediation and death of the Son of God, appeared needless in their view, and was therefore absolutely incredible in their sight. This they stumbled at, as the great stumbling-stone, as St. Paul tells us, who was intimately acquainted with the whole affair. (Rom. ix. 30—33.) It did bear too hard upon their moral character, as it supposed them so infinitely odious and hell-deserving in the sight of God, that nothing short of the interposition of his own Son, as an expiatory sacrifice, could open a door for him, in justice and honor, to pardon and save them. But how exceeding unreasonable was this their conduct, as their own law so plainly held forth the infinite evil of sin, in threatening eternal damnation for the least transgression? (Gal. iii. 10;) which might easily have led them to a sense of their need of an atonement, of infinite value, had their hearts honestly lain open to conviction.

And is it not worthy our observation, that those among professed Christians, who have denied the divinity of Christ, have been wont generally also to deny our natural depravity, the infinite evil of sin, the eternity of hell torments, the necessity of any proper satisfaction for sin, the doctrine of justification by faith alone? And perhaps, to be a little more consistent with themselves, they ought to deny the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, in which the divinity of Christ, and these other doctrines, are set in so strong a light. And indeed Deism has been for some time growing to be the most fashionable scheme among the polite and genteel part of the nation. And loose principles and loose practices are preparing us apace for all those heavy judgments which seem to be coming on our nation and land.*

3. If Jesus Christ be in very deed the God that created the universe, we may be assured he is in every respect fit and sufficient for the whole work he undertook; nor will he, nor can he, fail to accomplish the whole design he had in view. He was originally unobliged to do a creature's duty, being by nature God; and so at liberty to undertake, and had where-

* Salmon, speaking of the present state of religion in England, says, "Vice and profaneness reign triumphant; the sacred truths of Christianity are questioned and disputed; and a man that is not an infidel, is scarce allowed to have common sense, among those that look upon themselves to be the polite world. — Salmon's *Geog. and Hist. Gram.* p. 245.

withal to pay our debt, infinite as it was; whereas, the whole creation had not a farthing to spare for us, owing all they had done, or could do, to God, on their own account. It was honorable to God to appoint such a surety for us; he was one God might honorably trust and deal with, as he was equal with God, and fellow to the Lord of Hosts. (Zech. xiii. 7.) He was worthy the regard of the infinite majesty, able to secure the honor of his law, establish his authority, and answer all the ends of government. He was fit to be admitted, as Mediator, into his presence chamber; to be exalted to sit at his right hand, a very unmeet place for a mere creature; and to be worshipped by all the heavenly hosts, in his Father's presence; the very thought of which, I am persuaded, no mere creature in that world could possibly endure, but rather with the angel, in Rev. xxii. 9, would say, "See thou do it not;" for I am but a mere creature; "worship God;"—and fit to sit at the head of the universe, to be made head over all things, to govern the world and the church; a place too high for a mere creature, a trust too great to be reposed in one by nature mutable, fallible, short-sighted; and meet only for immutability, infallibility, and omniscience;—and fit finally to judge the world, and as the great arbitrator between God and his rebellious creatures, to see right done, and cause justice to take place; an honor too great for a mere creature, and a work too difficult for any but the omniscient, who "only knows the hearts of all the children of men." But Immanuel is fit for all this, worthy the honor, and qualified for the work; and may be thus employed, thus exalted, thus worshipped; not inconsistent with, but to the glory of God the Father. Nor can we doubt but that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, nor fear but that he will accomplish all his designs of grace. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, etc.; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. lii. 7, applied to Christ, Rom. x. 15.)

4. But if indeed he was the God that created the universe; O, how awful and solemn the thought! If indeed he was the God that created the universe, who hung incarnate on the cross, "set forth to be a propitiation for sin, that God might be just;" what shall we say? what shall we think?

Let us look up, and behold him, surrounded by thousands of spectators, insulting: "If he be the King of Israel,"—indeed he was, but they knew it not; for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,—"if he be the King of Israel," they say, "let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him." They insult. He prays, "Father,

forgive them; they know not what they do." And with all his divinity concealed, as one forsaken of heaven, and cast out from the earth, there he hangs, and bleeds, and dies!

For as our rebellion, with all its circumstances, had been public, as it were, in the presence of the whole intelligent system, so now the satisfaction must be as publicly made. Satan, God's enemy, and our inveterate foe, had seduced our first parents, and in them virtually the whole human race, to transgress the divine law, and cast off the divine authority, and join with him. And here on earth Satan had set up his kingdom, in the sight of heaven, and in defiance of the Most High. And exulting in all his mischief, he was ready impiously to say, "In spite of God, and his Son, the day is my own. For if God pardons an apostate world, doomed to death, then will it appear, that he has no regard to his law, or to his threatening, or to impartial justice; which, when I was driven out of heaven, he pretended, was the motive. Nor can it fail to be matter of eternal triumph to us, to see the honor of his law, and government, and authority given up, to save his creature, man. Or if he resigns the whole human race to destruction, as he certainly will, if he deals by them as he did by us, it will be matter of eternal consolation and joy, to see we can ruin worlds as fast as he can make them. Let him take what course he will, we are sure of an eternal triumph." So stood the case. And all the inhabitants of heaven looked on, no doubt, to see the event.

"The honor of the divine government," said the Eternal Son,*

* I call him the Eternal Son, because he was not only "made of the seed of David, according to the flesh;" but also "declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness;" that is, as to his divine nature, "by the resurrection from the dead;" agreeable to those words in Mic. v. 2, "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth," that is, be born, "that is to be ruler in Israel, whose *goings forth*" (the same word in the original, before translated *come forth*) "have been of old, even from everlasting;" that is, as he was the Son of David according to the flesh, in time, so from eternal ages he was the Son of God, as to his divine nature. Therefore called, by way of eminence, God's "own Son," and "his only-begotten Son."

Quest. 1. How, then, is Christ "the first-born of every creature"? or, as it ought rather to be rendered, "the first-born of the whole creation"? I answer, 1. Not as to his human nature; for that was born not two thousand years ago; — 2. Nor as to his divine nature; for that, instead of being the first-born of every creature, was the Creator of the whole universe; — 3. But with respect to the privileges of the birthright, (Psal. lxxxix. 27,) he being appointed "heir of all things," in which Isaac was a type of him. (See Gen. xxv. 5.) All things were created by him and for him, originally; and now, as Mediator, he is put into possession of all things, as the great heir of the whole universe. And having thus the birthright, he is with propriety called the first-born of the whole creation.

Quest. 2. How is Christ the "beginning of the creation of God"? I answer, The word in the original signifies, the beginning, the chief, principality, dominion. And the meaning is, that Christ, as Mediator, is the head and ruler of the universe, and the great Chief of the creation of God. (Eph. i. 21.)

"must and shall be secured. The law is holy, just, and good; and must and shall be magnified and made honorable. Sin is as great an evil as my Father's law speaks it; and must and shall be considered and treated as such; and that in the sight of the whole system. For my Father's authority must and shall be publicly maintained. And yet Satan may be disappointed of his expected triumph. For the human race need not be resigned to ruin; for, lo, I am willing to become incarnate, and die in their room. Behold, here I am!" (Psal. xl. 7.)

"Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity, and art my express image;" said the eternal Father; "and even as thou hast said, so shall it be. 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.' Thy dying love shall defeat the designs of his infernal malice." Wherefore see him now on the cross, "set forth to be a propitiation for sin, to declare the righteousness of God, that God might be just, and yet justify the sinner that believes in Jesus." And there he spoils principalities and powers, saps the foundation of Satan's kingdom, and even triumphs over him on the cross; and all in sight, as it were, of the whole intelligent creation, and suited to give universal instruction.

Look up, and stand astonished at this greatest of all God's works. The Creator of the universe on the cross; dying as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin; offering up himself to his Father, as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the world; that by faith in his blood we might be justified and saved.

And was there indeed such infinite goodness in the divine nature, that God could find it in his heart to do this thing?—a thing of a nature superior, infinitely superior, to the creation of thousands and millions of such worlds as this. And was sin indeed such an infinite evil, that nothing could expiate it, but such a sacrifice as this?—sin, which we, stupid mortals, see so little evil in. And did the eternal Father value the honor of his law and government more than the life of his Son? And if these things were done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry? Where will the unrighteous and ungodly appear when this Jesus comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel? How vain will it be to cry for mercy, how vain to hope that impartial justice will relent! The Son of God prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and even agonized in blood; but it was not possible; justice must be satisfied; the Son of God himself must die; therefore impenitent, Christless sinners cannot escape; nor can they ever be released;

but "the smoke of their torment shall ascend forever and ever."

That God is in earnest, when he threatens to punish impenitent sinners with eternal damnation, cannot be made more evident than it is by the cross of Christ. However, it may be more attended to, and so work a more universal conviction. Yet their eternal damnation itself will not be a greater proof that God was in earnest, than the death of his Son on the cross. The whole intelligent system have here the strongest evidence of the impartial rectitude of the divine nature, and of the inflexibility of the divine justice, that can possibly be given; and at the same time, the boundless goodness of the divine nature set in the clearest point of light. Wherefore, to conclude: let us here behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; that, beholding in this glass the glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory; that so the gospel may become the power of God to our salvation; that while Christ crucified is to some a stumbling-block, and to others foolishness, he may be to us the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Now, to Him who loved us, and gave himself for us, be glory, honor, and praise, forever and ever. Amen.

To him, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Almighty; the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; who is God, the true God, the mighty God, the Holy One of Israel, sitting on a throne high and lifted up, God over all, blessed forever, by whom and for whom all things are created, — even to him let every knee bow in heaven and on earth; and it will be so far from derogating or detracting from the honor, that it will be "to the glory of God the Father." For "he and his Father are one." Yea, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." And to this one God in three persons, to whom we were dedicated in baptism, and from whom all blessings flow to us, even to him be ascribed "the kingdom, power, and glory, forever." AMEN.

THE MILLENNIUM.

AND I SAW AN ANGEL COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, HAVING THE KEY OF THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, AND A GREAT CHAIN IN HIS HAND. AND HE LAID HOLD ON THE DRAGON, THAT OLD SERPENT, WHICH IS THE DEVIL AND SATAN, AND BOUND HIM A THOUSAND YEARS; AND CAST HIM INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT, AND SHUT HIM UP, AND SET A SEAL UPON HIM, THAT HE SHOULD DECEIVE THE NATIONS NO MORE, TILL THE THOUSAND YEARS SHOULD BE FULFILLED.

Revelation XX. 1, 2, 3.

IN a great variety of respects, the Bible is the most remarkable book in the world. In it we have God's moral character clearly exhibited to view, by a history of his conduct, as moral Governor of the world from the beginning; and the nature of fallen man painted to the life by a history of their behavior for four thousand years. In it we have opened the glorious and astonishing method that has been entered upon to disappoint all Satan's designs, by the interposition of the Son of God; and are informed of his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, and of the glorious designs he has in view. And the whole is so contrived as to be admirably suited to all the circumstances and needs of a good man; that, as it were designed to be the good man's book, in a peculiar sense, so it is perfectly suited to his case. It is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works."

That sincere concern for the cause of truth and virtue, for the honor of God and interest of true religion, which is peculiar to a good man, whose character it is to love Christ above father and mother, wife and children, houses and lands, yea, better than his own life, must naturally subject him to a peculiar kind of solicitude; even as a child of a truly filial spirit is pained when it goes ill with his father's family, to whose interest he is closely attached, and has a whole system of inward sensations, that a stranger intermeddles not with. The Bible, the good man's book, is therefore wisely adapted to

ease the good man's pained heart, and afford consolation in this interesting and most important point; as it gives the strongest assurances that the cause of virtue shall finally prevail.

How insupportable must the grief of the pious Jews have been, sitting on the sides of the rivers of Babylon! "There we sat down," say they, "yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." And on the willows they hung their harps, nor could any thing divert their minds. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." How insupportable, I say, must their grief have been, while their glorious holy temple, and their holy city, the place of all their sacred solemnities, were lying desolate, and God's people in captivity, had it not been for that promise, so often repeated, that after seventy years God would visit them, and cause them to return to their own land! God knew beforehand the anguish which would be apt to fill their hearts, the sinking discouragements, and all the train of dark and gloomy thoughts they would be incident to; and beforehand provided a remedy. Yea, no sooner had he denounced their doom in the thirty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, but immediately in the next chapter, and for ten or twenty chapters together, does he provide for their support. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; speak comfortably to Jerusalem," etc.

So, how insupportable would have been the grief of the church of Christ, through the long, dark, cruel reign of mystical Babylon, while they beheld error and wickedness universally prevail, Satan getting his will in almost every thing, and to appearance no signs of better times, but all things wearing a dreadful aspect before their eyes: how great their grief; how sinking their discouragements; how almost insuperable their temptations to apostatize, and forsake a cause that Heaven seemed to forsake, had not the day of deliverance been expressly foretold, and the glory that should follow opened to view, by the spirit of prophecy! But in a firm belief that the cause they were engaged in, and for which they spilt their blood, would finally prevail, and prevail in this world, where they then beheld Satan reigning and triumphing, — I say, in a firm belief of this, the whole army of martyrs could march on to battle courageously, willing to sacrifice their lives in the cause, not doubting of final victory, although they themselves must fall in the field.

Indeed, were the salvation of his own soul the only thing the good man had in view, he would naturally be quite easy,

upon a full assurance that this was secured. So, had Moses cared for nothing but the welfare of himself, and of his posterity, he might have been satisfied, while the whole congregation of Israel were destroyed, if he might become a great nation, and that without any solicitude for the honor of the great name of the God of Israel; yea, although the idolatrous nations round about were fully established in the belief of the divinity of their idols, and brought to look upon the God of the Hebrews with ever so great contempt by the means. But, attached as he was to the honor of the God of Israel, nothing could give him satisfaction, but a prospect that that would be secured. The welfare of himself and of his family was of no importance in his esteem, compared with this. (See Exod. xxxii.)

It must, therefore, be remembered, that, as the Son of God left his Father's bosom, and the realms of light and glory, and expired on the cross in the utmost visible contempt, that he might spoil principalities and powers, bruise the serpent's head, destroy the works of the devil; so his true disciples have imbibed a measure of the same spirit; and, as volunteers enlisted under his banner, have the same thing in view. They long for the destruction of Satan's kingdom; and these petitions are the genuine language of their hearts: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Nor can the salvation of their own souls, although ever so safely secured, satisfy their minds, without a clear view and fair prospect of Christ's final victory over all his enemies. "But if our great General, who has sacrificed his life in the cause, may but at last obtain a complete victory, notwithstanding all the present dark appearances, this is enough," says the Christian soldier: "I am willing to risk all in his service, and die in the battle too. But if Satan were always to carry the day, O, who could live under the thought!"

This having been the temper of good men, more or less, even from the early ages of the world, and through all successive generations to this day, they have evidently wanted a peculiar support, which the rest of mankind stood in no need of, to carry them comfortably through such a long scene of darkness; wickedness prevailing, God dishonored, Satan triumphing, the world perishing, the true church of God more generally in sackcloth. And accordingly, the final victory of the cause of truth and virtue was intimated in the very first promise made to fallen man. And from time to time God repeated this comfortable prediction to his church and people;

nd finally, made it the chief subject of the last l
Scripture he ordered to be wrote for the use of his

Now, let us take a brief view of the whole se
divine predictions, from the beginning of the worl
to this in our text, contained in one of the last ch
Bible; that we may see what full evidence th
truth; and so what abundant cause for consolati
people of God.

I. Immediately after the fall, when the serpe
old serpent the devil, had just seduced mankind t
God, and had, to all appearance, laid this whole
petual ruin, even in the depths of this midnigh
ray of light shone down from heaven. "The
woman shall bruise the serpent's head." As if
"I see the scheme that Satan has laid to ruin th
establish his impious, malicious cause: I see it, a
mined to defeat it. The feebler woman he has
but her almighty seed shall conquer him, and
subdue him, and prevent all future mischief by
pent is subdued and incapacitated for further
his head is crushed to pieces under the indigna
determined on his death." This was a complete
denounced against Satan, at the head of the kin
ness. And it fully implied, that the cause of
righteousness, should finally obtain a complete

II. After this gracious and glorious promise
chief foundation of all the hopes of God's
thousand years, God was pleased to point out
family from whence this mighty Deliverer shou
intimate what a universal blessing he should
nations of the earth. "And in thy seed shall
of the earth be blessed," said God to Abraham
plainly supposed, that the cause of truth an
notwithstanding the dark state the world then
ing fast into idolatry, and would for many ag
in heathenish darkness, should yet in due
prevail over the whole earth; for "in thy s
families of the earth be blessed." This sa
repeated again and again to Abraham, and af
and to Jacob.

III. Hitherto God had supported his peop
with promises, with verbal predictions; but f
Moses to the days of Solomon, king of Isr
people's faith, God did, besides repeated pro
thing, by a great variety of wonderful works,

glorious day; and at the same time show, that he had sufficient wisdom and power to accomplish the greatest designs; that his people might be convinced, that he could easily bring to pass, for the good of his church, whatsoever seemed good in his sight.

Israel, in the Egyptian bondage, were a designed type of a fallen world under the dominion and tyranny of Satan. Nor was Pharaoh more loath to let Israel go, than Satan is to have his subjects desert him, and his kingdom go to ruin. But notwithstanding all the seeming impossibilities in the way of Israel's deliverance, infinite wisdom knew how to accomplish the divine designs. God could even cause a member of Pharaoh's family to educate one to be an instrument of this designed deliverance. And in due time, behold, all the armies of Israel march forth from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; and Pharaoh, and his chariots, and all his host, lie buried in the Red Sea! So easily can God bring forth his people even out of the anti-Christian kingdom, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt; and, if he pleases, raise up the instruments of this glorious work, even in the court of Rome.

And when the name of the true God was almost forgotten through all the earth, and the devil worshipped in his room, in idols of various names, through all the nations, God knew how to make his name known, and to cause his fame to spread abroad, and fill the whole earth with his glory, by wonders wrought in the land of Ham, by descending on Mount Sinai, by leading the armies of Israel forty years in the wilderness, in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, giving them bread from heaven and water out of the flinty rock, dividing Jordan, delivering up one and thirty idolatrous kings to the sword of Joshua, raising up judges one after another in a miraculous manner to deliver his people, until the days of David and Solomon, types of Christ — of David, who, Messiah-like, subdued the enemies of Israel all around, of Solomon, who built the holy temple, and filled Jerusalem with riches and glory. He who hath done all these things, can easily accomplish all the designs of his heart, preserve his church, raise up deliverance, break to pieces the kingdoms of the earth for her sake, make truth victorious, and set up the new Jerusalem in all her spiritual glory, build up his church as a glorious holy temple, and set the Son of David upon the throne; by whose hands, Satan and all the powers of darkness shall be subdued, chained, sealed up in the bottomless pit, as much afraid, and as much unable to attempt any mischief, as the subdued nations around Israel were in the very height of David's power.

But when shall the Son of David reign, and the church have rest? When shall the cause of truth and righteousness thus prevail? Perhaps the very time was designed to be shadowed forth in the law of Moses, in the institution of their holy days. The seventh day, said God, who always had this glorious season of rest in view, "the seventh day shall be a Sabbath of rest, the seventh month shall be full of holy days, the seventh year shall be a year of rest:" so, perhaps, after six thousand years are spent in labor and sorrow by the church of God, the seventh thousand shall be a season of spiritual rest and joy, a holy sabbath to the Lord. And as God the Creator was six days in forming a confused chaos into a beautiful world, and rested the seventh, so God the Redeemer, after six thousand years' labor in the work of the new creation, may rest on the seventh; and then proclaim a general liberty to an enslaved world, and grant a general pardon to a guilty race; as in the year of jubilee, among the Jews, every enslaved Jew was set at liberty, and the debts of all the indebted were cancelled.

IV. These things, thus shadowed forth in types, were also expressly declared by the mouths of the ancient prophets, from the days of David, and forward to the end of that dispensation; and the same things are hinted here and there in the New Testament, and largely opened to view in the Revelation of St. John. So that both the Old and New Testaments join to raise in us, who live in these ages, the highest assurance, that it is God's design to "give to his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.— For all kings shall bow down before him, and all nations shall serve him. — And the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. — They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn war no more. — For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. — A nation shall be born in a day. — All thy people shall be righteous. — They shall all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. — And holiness to the Lord shall be written on every thing. — Kings shall become nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers, — and there shall be nothing to hurt or offend. — The inhabitants shall not so much as say, I am sick. — And this kingdom shall fill the whole earth. — And all nations and languages shall serve him. — And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high God.— And the Jews shall be called in, and the fulness of the Gen-

tiles. — For the gospel shall be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. — And Satan shall be bound, and Christ shall reign on earth a thousand years."* — And as surely as the Jews were delivered out of the Babylonish captivity, and Babylon itself destroyed, even so surely shall all these things be accomplished in their time. And mystical Babylon shall "sink as a mill-stone into the sea, and shall be found no more at all."

V. But when shall these things be? — I answer, in the first place, it is plain, as yet they have not been, these great things have not been accomplished. They were not accomplished when the Jews were brought out of their Babylonish captivity; for, from thence to the coming of Christ, they never were in so flourishing a state as they had been before. They were not accomplished in the apostolic age; for St. John, when most, if not all, of the other apostles were dead, spake of these things, in the Revelation, as yet to come to pass. They were not accomplished in the three first centuries; for that was almost one continued scene of blood. They were not accomplished in the days of Constantine the Great; for it is since then that the man of sin has been revealed. Nor are they accomplished to this day; for Satan is still walking to and fro through the earth, and going up and down therein. Babylon is not fallen; the Jews are not called; nor is the fulness of the Gentiles come in; but the greatest part of the earth, to this day, sit in heathenish darkness.

When then shall they be accomplished? Not till "the holy city has been trodden under foot forty-two months." Not till "the witnesses have prophesied a thousand, two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth." And not till "the woman has been in the wilderness a time and times and half a time." Now, a time and times and half a time, that is, three years and a half, is equal to forty-two months; which is equal

* Satan shall be bound, etc. "The church of Christ shall enjoy purity of religion in peace, without any disturbance from those old enemies of mankind, working in the children of disobedience." — Daubuz on the place.

"And this seems to imply, that all shall be converted. However, if there be any that remain unconverted, they will, during the imprisonment of Satan, be in so small a number, and so feeble in comparison of the true Christians, that they shall neither dare, nor be able, to disturb the peace of Christ's kingdom." — Lowman on the place.

A spirit of strict piety shall rise so high, and so universally prevail, that it shall be as though all the martyrs of former ages were risen from the dead, and appeared upon the stage all at once. This seems to be the sense of these words in Rev. xx. 4. The martyrs are said to rise from the dead, and reign with Christ a thousand years, much in the same sense as John the Baptist is called Elias, namely, because he was a man so nearly resembling that celebrated prophet. — See Lowman on the place.

to one thousand two hundred and sixty days; which doubtless means twelve hundred and sixty years, — a day for a year, — as the event has proved was the case in the prophecy of Daniel, who declared it to be seventy weeks, from the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem, to the death of Christ; for it proved to be four hundred and ninety years, which is seven times seventy, — a day for a year. (Dan. ix. 24.)

So that there is no difficulty in determining the downfall of Antichrist, but what arises from the uncertainty we are at when to date the beginning of his rise and reign. The bishops of Rome were some hundred years rising gradually from the honest character of a Scripture bishop to the grand title of Universal Pope, which was obtained A. D. 606. And it was a long time from this, before they got to the height of their grandeur, and the pope was constituted a temporal prince, which was not till A. D. 756.* And perhaps he may fall as gradually as he rose. And as now he has been falling two hundred and forty years, even ever since the beginning of the reformation, so we may rationally expect he will continue to fall, till Babylon sinks as a mill-stone into the sea. And then "the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." And all the hosts of heaven, as loud as thunder, shall say, "Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

And thus we have taken a brief view of the Scripture evidence, that the cause of truth and righteousness will finally become gloriously victorious.

VI. Nor is there the least reason to doubt the accomplishment of these things. For God in all times past has been faithful to his word, and is evidently sufficiently engaged in this affair; knows how, and can easily accomplish it; and it will be much to the honor of his great name to do it.

God has been faithful to his promises to his church from the beginning of the world. To all human appearance, it was a very unlikely thing, that the Hebrews, enslaved in Egypt, under Pharaoh, a very powerful monarch, and sunk down into idolatry, and very low-spirited, should arise, and go forth with all their flocks and herds, and march through the wilderness, and conquer the seven nations of Canaan, and possess their land. And so it was, to all human appearance, equally unlikely, that the Jews in Babylon should ever return to their own land. But

* See Bowers's History of the Popes.

God had promised in both cases, and God performed. And an event more surprising than either of these, yea, the most astonishing that could have happened, has also come to pass, just as God had said. The promised seed has been born, and the serpent has bruised his heel; and methinks now not only God's faithfulness, but even the nature of the case itself, should lead us to believe, that the seed shall bruise his head.

For, after God has appeared to be so infinitely engaged to destroy the works of the devil, as to give his only-begotten Son, it can surely never once be imagined, that he wants sufficient resolution to carry him through what yet remains to be done.

And he who could send Pharaoh's daughter to take up Moses, when an infant, out of his basket of bulrushes, and educate him in Pharaoh's court, that he might be skilled in all the arts of government; and when he had spent forty years in this situation, banish him into the land of Midian, that in the solitary life of a shepherd, for another forty years, he might attain to be the meekest man on earth; that he might, by both, be thoroughly qualified for the work designed him; — and he who could take David from feeding his father's sheep, and, after a course of trials so exceeding necessary to prepare frail man for high honors and great usefulness, exalt him to the throne of Israel, so thoroughly furnished to head their armies and subdue their foes, advance their external grandeur, and put great honor upon their religion; — and he who could take Daniel, one of the Jewish captives in Babylon, and raise him to such high honor and great authority, to be a father to his people through their seventy years' captivity, and by his means, perhaps, influence Cyrus so generously to release them, and assist them in their return; * — and finally, he who could take a number of poor illiterate fishermen, and the persecuting Saul, and by them lay the foundation of the Christian church, in spite of the united opposition of earth and hell; and after their death cause the Christian church to live through, yea, at last to triumph over,

* As Daniel understood the prophecies of Jeremiah, which had determined the time of the captivity to be seventy years, (Dan. ix. 2,) and had his heart so much in the affair of their return, as to "set his face to seek the Lord by fasting and prayer;" and being the chief man in the kingdom, must have free access to Cyrus; so nothing could be more natural than to show him an ancient Jewish prophecy, wherein he was mentioned by name, near two hundred years ago, and pointed out as a person who was to let go the Jewish captives, build Jerusalem, and lay the foundation of the temple. (Isai. xliv. 28; xlv. 1—3.) To which Cyrus no doubt refers in his proclamation, (Ezra i. 2, 3, 4,) "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you," etc.

the ten bloody persecutions, and even conquer the Roman empire; and that which is still more wonderful, to subsist to this day, notwithstanding all the subtle and cruel methods which have for so many hundred years been taken by Antichrist to extirpate Christianity out of the world; — I say, he who could do these things, cannot be at a loss for means, or want power, to effect the glorious things foretold, which yet remain to be accomplished.

And what if mankind are ever so estranged from God; and what if they are ever so averse to a reconciliation; and what if Satan reigns in the courts of princes, in the councils of the clergy, as well as in the cottages of the poor; and what if even the whole world in a manner lies in wickedness, so that a general conflagration might rather be expected, as it is so eminently deserved; — are these things any bar in the way?

What if mankind have abused divine grace from the beginning of the world; what if they have murdered his prophets, his Son, and his apostles; what if they have resisted and grieved the Holy Spirit, and perverted the doctrines, and gone counter to the precepts of his holy word; yea, what if it appears that mankind are really on Satan's side, and this after all the kind methods God has taken to reclaim a guilty world, so that even the best man on earth, or the kindest angel in heaven, might be discouraged, totally and finally discouraged, and think it never worth while to take any more pains with such a perverse race; but that it were more suitable to the rules of good government to resign them to destruction; — are any, or all these things together, a sufficient bar to the accomplishment of God's designs, whose goodness is absolutely infinite?

What! after the Son of God has been offered as a sacrifice of atonement, to secure the honor of the divine government, and open a way for the honorable exercise of his grace; what! after the Messiah has been exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins; and after all power and authority in heaven and earth is given into his hands, on purpose to destroy the kingdom of Satan, and bring every nation, kindred, and tongue, to bow the knee to God; yea, when the infinitely wise Governor of the world has before determined to permit the wickedness of mankind to come out and stand in so glaring a light, and to suffer Satan so long to practise and prosper; to this very purpose, that his power, wisdom, and grace might be the more effectually and the more gloriously displayed, in the accomplishment of all his glorious designs?

Instead of being discouraged, from a view of the past or the present state of the world, as without the light of divine reve-

lation we should naturally have been; methinks now, viewing all things in the light of holy Scripture, it must be perfectly rational to conclude, that all these things are only preparatory; as an introduction to the glorious day, even as all the cruel bondage of Israel in Egypt, and all the haughty conduct of Pharaoh, were but preparatory, as an introduction to the glorious event that God had then in his eye. And what unspeakable honor will redound to God most high, if, after all the vile conduct of this apostate world, and notwithstanding all their ill desert, and after all the subtle methods Satan has taken to make his kingdom strong; I say, what unspeakable honor will redound to God most high, if after all this he should accomplish his glorious design! And when things have been ripening these five or six thousand years, and are now so nearly every way prepared for God to get himself a great name in the total destruction of Satan's kingdom, can we once imagine that God will let the opportunity slip. Or, rather, ought we not firmly to believe, that when every thing is quite ripe, then God will arise, make bare his arm, and fill the whole world with his glory?

Especially, considering, that as things stand, the honor of all his glorious perfections lies at stake. For ever since the Almighty gave out the word, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, even from that very day, that old serpent, with all his subtlety, has employed his whole power to defeat the divine designs, maintain his kingdom in the world, and escape the dreadful blow. He stirred up Cain to kill his brother, and never left till the whole earth was filled with violence, which brought on the general deluge. And after the flood he was industrious to divert mankind from the knowledge and worship of the true God, and to establish idolatry and the worship of devils in all the kingdoms of the earth. And since Christianity appeared, he has turned himself into every shape to defeat the gracious designs of the gospel, and has prevailed and reigned above a thousand years, at the head of the grand antichristian apostasy. And should the Almighty suffer him to go on and prosper, and finally prevail, what would become of his own great name? And how great would be their triumph in the infernal regions, to think, that in spite of God and of his Son, from the beginning to the end of the world, they have held out in a constant war, kept the field, and at last come off victorious! Wherefore, as when God repeats the wonderful works which he had done for Israel, in the days of old, in the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel, he constantly says, "I wrought for mine own great name," so here, in this case, will he do it again,

and that in the most eminent manner; as it is written, "the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this."

So that, in a word, if almighty power and infinite wisdom, at the head of the universe, infinitely engaged, are a sufficient match for the guilty, impotent powers of darkness, then we may depend upon it, Satan will meet with an overthrow as notable as did Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. And as proud Babylon, once the mistress of kingdoms, is now no more, so mystical Babylon shall sink as a mill-stone in the sea, and rise no more forever. And, —

VII. Whatever mistakes the Jewish rabbies might fall into, in their interpretation of Daniel's seventy weeks, and in their attempts to fix the precise time of the Messiah's coming; and whatever mistaken notions any of them had about the nature of his kingdom, as though it was to be of this world, and he to appear in all earthly grandeur; and although his coming, to some, might seem to be so long delayed that they began to give up all hopes of it, and to contrive some other meaning to all the ancient prophecies, or even to call in question the inspiration of the prophets; yet neither the mistakes of some, nor the infidelity of others, at all altered the case. Days, and months, and years, hastened along, and one revolution among the kingdoms of the earth followed upon another, till the fulness of time was come, till all things were ripe; and then, behold, the Messiah was born. Even so it shall be now.

Whatever mistakes Christian divines may fall into, in their interpretation of six hundred and sixty-six, the number of the beast, or in their endeavors to fix the precise time when the twelve hundred and sixty years of Antichrist's reign shall begin and end; or whatever wrong notions some have had, or may have, about the nature of the millennium, as though Christ was to reign personally on earth; and if some, meanwhile, begin to think, that all things will go on as they have done, and to conclude, that the expectation of these glorious days, which has prevailed in the Christian church from the beginning, is merely a groundless fancy; yet none of these things will at all alter the case. Days, and months, and years, will hasten along, and one revolution among the kingdoms of the earth follow upon another, until the fulness of time is come; till all things are ripe for the event; and then the ministers of Christ will accomplish, in reality, what St. John saw in his vision. — "I saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." — And then shall it come to pass, that the veil of ignorance, which hath so long spread

over all nations, shall be destroyed, (Isa. xxv. 7,) and knowledge shall so greatly increase, that it shall be as though the light of the moon were as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold, until the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth as the waters do the sea. And then there shall be nothing to hurt or offend in all God's holy mountain. For Babylon shall fall, Satan be bound, and Christ will reign, and truth and righteousness universally prevail, a thousand years.

REMARKS AND INFERENCES.

1. When, therefore, our Savior, in the days of his flesh, denominated his followers "a little flock," from the smallness of their number, he had no design to teach us, that this would always be the case; for although it was very true, that his flock was at that time a little flock, yet the day was coming, when that little leaven should leaven the whole lump, and the stone cut out without hands should become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. So, although it was a saying very applicable, not only to our Savior's day, but to most other periods of the church, that "many are called and few are chosen," yet it does not hence follow that this will be the case when "a nation shall be born in a day," and "all the people shall be righteous." And although it has commonly been so, that of the many who have sought to enter in at the strait gate, but few have been able, and the generality have from age to age gone in the broad way, which leads down to destruction, yet it shall be quite otherwise, when Satan is bound, that he may deceive the nations no more; and when all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest; when the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. For it is very plain that these and such like expressions used by our Savior, which were applicable to the then times, and to most other periods, when the number of true converts hath been comparatively very small, were never designed to be applicable to that glorious period yet to come, which is to be the grand harvest-time, when the Jews (who are to this day for that very purpose, no doubt, by divine Providence preserved a distinct people) and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in. Nor can it be right to interpret such expressions in such a sense as to render them inconsistent with what the Scriptures so plainly teach shall be the case in the latter days. Therefore, —

2. Notwithstanding hitherto but few have been saved, there

is no evidence but that yet the greater part of mankind may be saved. Nothing can be argued against this from such expressions as have been just mentioned, for the reason already suggested. Nor can any thing be argued from any other passages of Scripture; for the Scripture nowhere teaches that the greatest part of the whole human race will finally perish. I am sensible, many seem to take this for granted, and they are greatly strengthened in this belief, from a view of the awful state mankind have been in from the beginning of the world to this day. But if we should even grant, that hitherto not one in ten thousand have been saved, yet it may come to pass,—there may be time enough for it, and men enough yet born,—I say, it may yet come to pass, that by far the greatest part of mankind may be saved.

For, as the Scriptures constantly teach, that in these glorious days universal peace shall prevail; and instead of war, the nations shall employ their time in useful labor, "shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks," so it will naturally come to pass, that mankind, who are now in vast multitudes destroyed in the wars from one generation to another, will be greatly increased in numbers, and plentifully provided for. Only remove wars, famines, and all those desolating judgments which the sins of mankind have from age to age brought down on a guilty world, and let that universal peace and prosperity take place, which indeed will naturally result from the sincere practice of pure Christianity, and mankind will naturally increase, and spread, and fill all the earth. And while every one improves his time well, and is diligent in his calling, according to the rules of our holy religion, and all luxury, intemperance, and extravagance are banished from the nations of the earth, it is certain that this globe will be able to sustain with food and raiment a number of inhabitants immensely greater than ever yet dwelt on it at a time. And now, if all these shall "know the Lord from the least to the greatest," as the Scripture asserts, so that "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea," for a thousand years together, it may easily, yea, it will naturally, come to pass, that there will be more saved in these thousand years, than ever before dwelt upon the face of the earth from the foundation of the world.

Some indeed understand the thousand years in the Revelation agreeable to other prophetical numbers in that book,—a day for a year. So the time, and times, and half a time, that is, three years and a half, and the forty-two months, and the twelve hundred and sixty days, are no doubt to be reckoned.

And if the dark period is to be reckoned by this rule, it should seem that the light period should likewise. For otherwise the dark period, which in that book is represented to be the shortest, will indeed be the longest; the twelve hundred and sixty days longer than the thousand years; and if the thousand years is reckoned a day for a year, as the Scripture year contains three hundred and sixty days, so the thousand years will amount to three hundred and sixty thousand years, in which there might be millions saved, to one that has been lost. But not to insist upon this, if this glorious period is to last only a thousand years literally, there may be many more saved than lost.

If it be granted that it is difficult to compute with any exactness in such a case as this, yet it is easy to make such a computation as may satisfy us in the point before us. For in Egypt the Hebrews doubled at the rate of about once in fourteen years; in New England the inhabitants double in less than twenty-five years; it will be moderate, therefore, to suppose mankind, in the millennium, when all the earth is full of peace and prosperity, will double every fifty years. But at this rate, there will be time enough in a thousand years to double twenty times, which would produce such a multitude of people, as that although we should suppose all, who live before the millennium begins, to be lost, yet if all these should be saved, there would be above seventeen thousand saved, to one that would be lost; as may appear from the table below.*

*1	2	In the first column we have the twenty periods,
2	4	which one thousand years will make, at fifty
3	8	years to a period. In the second column, we see
4	16	in what proportion mankind will increase, if they
5	32	are supposed to double in every fifty years. At
6	64	the end of the first fifty years, there will be two
7	128	for one; and so on. At the end of the twentieth
8	256	period, there will be above a million for one.
9	512	Now, suppose the world to stand six thousand
10	1,024	years before the millennium; and suppose it in
11	2,048	every age to be as full of inhabitants as it will
12	4,096	be when the millennium begins; and suppose,
13	8,192	through all the six thousand years, all the in-
14	16,384	habitants of the earth to have died off, and new
15	32,768	ones come in their room, at the rate of once in
16	65,536	fifty years; six thousand years, at fifty years to
17	131,072	a period, will be one hundred and twenty peri-
18	262,144	ods; one hundred and twenty worlds full; all
19	524,288	lost, suppose; yet by the table we see, that the
20	1,048,576	seventh period alone, (which is one hundred and
Sum total,	2,097,150	twenty-eight,) would more than counterbalance the whole:

Suppose all before the millennium lost, = 120;
Suppose all in the millennium saved, = 2097150
Then, 120 : 2097150 : : 1 : $17476\frac{30}{120}$, Q. E. D.

That is, above seventeen thousand would be saved, to one lost; which was the

3. The periods past, that have been so dark, ought to be considered as introductory to this bright and glorious scene, and in various respects as preparatory thereto.

An apostate race, who had joined with the fallen angels in a course of rebellion against the Governor of the universe, might justly have been forsaken of God, and given up to a state of perfect darkness and woe, from generation to generation, entirely under the power of the prince of darkness. What has happened, in dark ages past, may help us a little to realize what might justly always have been the woful state of a fallen world. We have had a specimen of the dreadful nature and tendency of Satan's government, in all the idolatry, wickedness, and woe, which have filled the world; and we have seen a little what is in the heart of fallen man, who have slain the Lord's prophets, crucified his Son, and shed the blood of thousands, yea, of millions of his servants. And what has happened may help us to realize a little what must have been the state of a fallen world, if grace had never interposed. At the same time it hath appeared, after the best contrived experiments have been sufficiently tried, that it is not in the heart of fallen man to repent, nor can he be brought to it by any external means whatsoever; whereby the absolute necessity of the interposition of supernatural grace hath been set in the most glaring light. And now, if, after all, God should effectually interpose, destroy the influence of Satan, scatter the darkness which fills the world, recover mankind to God, and cause truth and righteousness at last to prevail; it would appear to be altogether of God, of his own mere self-moving goodness and sovereign grace. And after so long and sore a bondage, mankind will be the more sensible of the greatness of the deliverance. Nor can it ever be said by a proud and haughty world, "We did not need the influences of divine grace to bring us right;" when all other methods had been sufficiently tried, and tried in vain. But God may justly say, "What could have been done more to reclaim mankind, that I have not done, and to what purpose would it have been to have taken one step further? I tried

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point to be proved. Therefore nothing hinders, but that the greatest part of mankind may yet be saved, if God so pleases. There is time enough for it, and may be men enough yet born. And if these calculations may serve to clear up this, they answer the end proposed. What proportion of mankind will finally be saved, and what lost, none can tell. It is nowhere revealed. God was not obliged to save one out of all this guilty, lost world. Hitherto the generality may have perished; and the Lord is righteous. But who can tell to what a degree God may yet glorify his grace? The Holy Scriptures encourage us to look for things exceeding great and glorious; even for such events as may put a new face on all God's past dispensations. (See the Sermons on the Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin.)

them enough. There was no hope. Their heart was a heart of stone. Therefore, behold, I, even I, will take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh; and an apostate world shall be ashamed and confounded, and shall never open their mouth, when I shall do all these things for them."

We are apt to wonder why these glorious days should be so long delayed, if God indeed intends such mercy to men. But God, infinitely wise, knows what is best; knows how to conduct the affairs of the universe; knows when is the fittest time to introduce this glorious state of things; knows when matters will be all ripened, and every thing in the moral world prepared; so that this glorious day may be ushered in to the best advantage, in a manner most suited to honor God and his Son, to humble a haughty world, and to disappoint Satan most grievously, after all his wily schemes, great success, and high expectations: I say, God knows when this will be. And this is the very time he has fixed upon for this glorious work.

4. It therefore becomes all the followers of Christ, in their several spheres, under a firm belief of these things, to be of good courage, and exert themselves to the utmost, in the use of all proper means to suppress error and vice of every kind, and promote the cause of truth and righteousness in the world; and so be workers together with God.

If one stood at the head of this glorious army, which has been in the wars above these five thousand years, and has lived through many a dreadful campaign, and were allowed to make a speech to these veteran troops upon this glorious theme, he might lift up his voice, and say, "Hail, noble heroes! brave followers of the Lamb! — Your General has sacrificed his life in this glorious cause, and spoiled principalities and powers on the cross; and now he lives and reigns. He reigns on high, with all power in heaven and earth in his hands. Your predecessors, the prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with undaunted courage, have marched into the field of battle, and conquered dying, and now reign in heaven. Behold, ye are risen up in their room, are engaged in the same cause, and the time of the last general battle draws on, when a glorious victory is to be won; and, although many a valiant soldier may be slain in the field, yet the army shall drive all before them at last. And Satan being conquered, and all the powers of darkness driven out of the field, and confined to the bottomless pit, ye shall reign with Christ a thousand years; — reign in love and peace, while truth and righteousness ride triumphant through the earth. Wherefore lay aside every weight, and, with your hearts wholly intent on this grand affair, gird up your loins,

and with all the spiritual weapons of faith, prayer, meditation, and watchfulness, with redoubled zeal and courage, fall on your spiritual enemies. Slay every lust that yet lurks within, as knowing your domestic foes are the most dangerous; and with gentleness, meekness, and wisdom, by your holy conduct, your pious examples, your kind instructions, your friendly admonitions, spread the savor of divine knowledge all around you, as ye are scattered here and there through a benighted world; laboring to win souls to Christ, to induce the deluded followers of Satan to desert his camp, and enlist as volunteers under your Prince, Messiah. And if the powers of darkness should rally all their forces, and a general battle through all the Christian world come on, O, love not your lives to the death! Sacrifice every earthly comfort in the glorious cause! Sing the triumphs of your victorious General in prisons and at the stake! And die courageously, firmly believing the cause of truth and righteousness will finally prevail."

Surely it is infinitely unbecoming the followers of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, to turn aside to earthly pursuits, or to sink down in unmanly discouragements, or to give way to sloth and effeminacy, when there is so much to be done, and the glorious day is coming on. How should those who handle the pen of the writer, exert themselves to explain and vindicate divine truths, and paint the Christian religion in all its native glories. How should the pulpit be animated, from Sabbath to Sabbath, with sermons full of knowledge and light, full of spirit and life, full of zeal for God, and love to men, and tender pity to infatuated sinners. Christ loves to have his ministers faithful, whether the wicked will hear or not. And let pious parents be unwearied in their prayers for, and instructions of, their children, and never faint under any discouragements; as knowing that Christ is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, and can do it for whom he will. Bring your children and friends, with all their spiritual diseases, and lay them at his feet; as once they did their sick, when this kind Savior dwelt on earth. Let pious persons of every age, and in every capacity, awake from sleep, and arise from the dead, and live and act worthy their glorious character and high expectations; and in their several stations exert themselves to the utmost to promote the Redeemer's glorious cause. Let this age do their share, as David, although the temple was not to be built in his day, yet exerted himself to lay up materials for that magnificent edifice, on which his heart was intently set; as knowing that in his son's day it would be set up in all its glory. So let us rise up, and with

the greatest alacrity contribute our utmost towards this building, this living temple, this temple all made of lively stones, of stones alive, in which God is to dwell, and which will infinitely exceed in glory the temple of Solomon, that was built of dead timber and lifeless stones. And let this be our daily prayer, an answer to which we may be assured of, whatever other requests are denied us, — "Our Father which art in heaven, etc.; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. AMEN."

THE GREAT EVIL OF SIN,

AS COMMITTED AGAINST GOD.*

AGAINST THEE, THEE ONLY HAVE I SINNED.
Psal. li. 4.

A SENSE of the great evil of sin is essential to true repentance. It may be laid down as a general maxim, that we cannot be suitably affected towards things, unless we see them as they are. Be they, on the one hand, ever so amiable and lovely, yet if their beauty is not seen, our hearts will be untouched. Even the infinite glory and excellence of God will not excite our esteem and love, if we have no sense of it; and let the moral beauty of the divine government be ever so great, although it may ravish the heavenly world who see it, yet we, while blind to it, shall be wholly unmoved. And be the gospel way of salvation, by free grace through Jesus Christ, ever so glorious, yet if the glories of it are not discerned, we may be far from admiring that divine constitution. So, on the other hand, let sin be ever so great an evil, yet if the great evil of it is not seen, we shall never be suitably affected towards it. Though it deserves to be hated ever so much, and though there be ever so great reason that we should be humbled and abased before God on the account of it, and mourn in the bitterness of our hearts for it, and be afraid of, and watch against, it, as the greatest of evils, yet we shall not, unless it be seen as it is. Did we see it perfectly as it is, we should feel towards it perfectly as we ought; but unless we see it in some measure as it is, we shall feel towards it in no measure as we ought. So that a sense of the great evil of sin is plainly essential to true repentance. And, indeed, it is that from which repentance does nextly and most immediately take its rise. Love to God, faith in Christ, and hope in the mercy

* Preached at Goshen, at a meeting of the Consociation of Litchfield county, May 30, 1753.

of God through him, prepare and dispose the heart to mourn for sin: but it is a sense of the great evil of sin, which immediately affects the heart with sorrow, and humbles and abases the soul before the Lord. "My sin is ever before me;—against thee have I sinned;—thou art just when thou speakest;—have mercy upon me, O God." So also St. Paul: "the law is spiritual; I am carnal, sold under sin;—O, wretched man that I am: who shall deliver me?"

Now, the evil of sin arises from our obligations to do otherwise. And the more strongly we are obliged to do our duty, the more wicked is it in us to neglect it, or go contrary to it; and the more are we to blame; and the greater cause have we to be sorry and penitent.

We may be under various kinds of obligations to the practice of virtue. The honor and authority of God may oblige us; the welfare of our fellow-creatures may oblige us; and our own present and future happiness may oblige us too; and therefore we may be to blame, and have cause of repentance, on several accounts; and that, for the evil contained in one particular action, viewed in various respects, as it is; against God; our fellow-men; or our own interest, for this world and the next. And as is our sense of these things, so shall we be affected; that is, we shall be sorry, and blame ourselves accordingly.

For let our obligations be ever so great; yet, if they are not seen, we shall not feel ourselves obliged, or look upon ourselves to blame, when we do wrong. And if ever we do blame ourselves at all, it will be only as we have gone contrary to such obligations as we are sensible of. Although we may be to blame in other respects, yet we shall not blame ourselves. If we be to blame, for instance, for going contrary to the honor and authority of God, yet we shall not be disposed to blame ourselves on that account, unless we are sensible how that the honor and authority of God did oblige us. If we are sorry for what we have done, at any time, it will be only on such accounts, on which we see we have done wrong; and for such reasons, for which we see we ought to have done otherwise. Thus, if we see our great obligations to all holiness and righteousness, arising from the nature of God, and the reasonableness of his government, sin will accordingly appear as an infinite evil. But if we see ourselves under no obligations to God, but merely in way of gratitude for the kindnesses we have received, we shall feel to blame for our sins only as they are instances of ingratitude. And in a word, in what respects soever we see ourselves obliged to do right, in those respects

we shall feel ourselves to blame when we do wrong; and that in exact proportion to the weight with which a sense of our obligations lies on our spirits.

Hence persons of an epicurean and atheistical temper, who see themselves under no obligations to virtue, but merely from present self-interest, as a virtuous conduct tends to their present ease, profit, and honor; if they neglect their duty, and do wrong, they will blame themselves and be sorry only because they have hurt themselves, and gone contrary to their own interest for this world. But if persons have some belief of a future state, and of the rewards and punishments of another life, they may be sorry for their sins, because by them they have forfeited heaven and exposed themselves to hell. Or, if they are under the influence of a compassionate temper, or of natural affection, and have injured a neighbor, a friend, or near relative, nature may prompt them, on that account, to be sorry. Or, if they firmly believe that God loves them, that Christ died for them, and that they are made heirs of eternal glory; and see that, by their sins, they have been guilty of great ingratitude towards their almighty Benefactor; they may, merely from natural gratitude, be sorry on that account. But if the great evil of sin, as it is against a God of infinite glory, be not seen, they will not mourn for sin on that account. And yet, if that which constitutes the great evil of sin is not seen, and sin is not hated and mourned for, upon the account of that which is its chief and principal malignity, our repentance is not genuine. It is of importance, therefore, that we know wherein the great evil of sin does really consist. For which purpose, let us attend to the words of our text, which contains the confession of a true penitent, and exhibits the sentiments of a contrite heart — "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Where, observe, 1. The particular sins referred to in these words, namely, murder and adultery. For this Psalm was composed after that Nathan the prophet came to David, and reproved him, and denounced the judgments of God against him for those sins. And in this Psalm he expressly refers to the sin of murder, which he had been guilty of. "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God." And it is supposed he has reference to his other sin, in those words, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Now, it is commonly and justly observed, that some sins are immediately committed against God, such as blasphemy, idolatry, etc., while other sins immediately respect our neighbor, and are injurious to him, as was David's murder and adultery. And yet, it seems, if we injure our neighbor,

God is sinned against, and we are to blame principally on that account.

For, observe, 2. The great evil of David's sins, as set forth in his confession, and that which made them so exceeding heinous, was, that they were committed against God. Against thee, thee only — thee chiefly and principally — have I sinned. He had injured Uriah, and done wrong on that account: he had exposed himself to reproach among his subjects, and to anguish in his own heart, and was to blame for bringing so great a calamity on himself. But the greatness of his sin consisted in its being against God. And this seems to swallow up all his heart, and to overwhelm him with sorrow, — "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned;" — and on this account, his sin appeared so great to him, that he was ready to justify God, in the dreadful sentence which God denounced against him, by Nathan the prophet — that his wives should be defiled in the sight of the sun, the sword never depart from his house, and that his child should die. — "Thou art just when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest." — God had sent Nathan to charge home his sin and guilt upon him, and to tell him, that by what he had done he had despised the Lord, and despised the commandment of the Lord, and given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme. He had despised the Lord, and despised the commandment of the Lord; for God had said, — Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; — for I am the Lord. But David had practically said, "I will commit adultery with Bathsheba, and gratify my lust, for all that God says; and I will murder her innocent husband Uriah, that I may hide my sin and shame by this wicked means, notwithstanding the divine prohibition. I do not care for God nor his law, or authority, so much, but that I will go through with my designs, and that, let come what will; for I value my lust more than God, and my reputation more than his honor; and therefore neither God, nor his law, authority, or honor, will I regard." This was the language of David's conduct; and this is the language of every sin. And thus he despised the commandment of God, and despised God himself. And this was, with good reason, charged home upon him, as the great evil of his sin; and for which God would severely punish him. And in a sense of this, with a broken heart, he cries out, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: wherefore thou art just when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest." And thus we see wherein the great evil of David's sins did consist, both in the sight of God, and to his own sense and apprehension after he was become a sincere

penitent. And because every sin is as really committed against God as those were; and so what was true, in this case, will hold true in all other cases; therefore from the words we may make this doctrinal observation, namely, —

DOCTRINE.

The great evil of every sin consists in this, that it is committed against God.

This is true of every sin; not only of those which immediately respect God; as blasphemy, idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, and the like; but also of those which immediately respect and injure ourselves or neighbors; as in this case of David. Their great evil, their great aggravation, that which above all things renders us to blame, and deserving of punishment for our sins, is, that they are against God. They may be against our own interest and honor in this world; and we may be to blame on that account. They may be against our welfare in the world to come; and we may be to blame on that account. They may be against our neighbor's good, for time, or for eternity, or both; and we may be to blame in that respect. But this is the great evil of sin, that it is against God.

Some assert, that our great obligation to virtue arises from its tendency to our own particular happiness; and that therefore the great evil of sin consists in its tendency to our own particular misery. Others maintain, that our great obligation to virtue arises from its tendency to promote the public good; and consequently the great evil of sin must consist in its tendency to injure the public. But the Scripture scheme is different from both; for according to that, it seems, our great obligations to virtue must arise from God; because it is plain, in Scripture account, the great evil of sin consists in its being against God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Here I will attempt to show,

I. How, and in what respect, sin is against God.

II. How great an evil it is on that account.

III. That this is the great evil of sin.

Which heads being gone through, I shall offer some remarks, and then apply the whole to our own use.

I. I am to show how, and in what respect, sin is against God.

1. Sin is contrary to the nature of God. — A sinful nature and a holy nature are in direct opposition; they are a perfect contrariety to each other. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and sin is that abominable thing which God's soul abhors.

(Jer. xliv. 4.) The Holy One of Israel is a being of infinite understanding, and of perfect rectitude; and has a complete and comprehensive view of all things; and in all cases sees what is right, and fit, and beautiful to be done; how the Deity should be loved and honored in the world which he has made; and how his creatures and subjects should live together in mutual love and benevolence, and not an unjust or cruel act be ever done throughout all his dominions. And as God sees what is right, and fit, and beautiful, and what is contrary, so he is accordingly affected towards things. He loves righteousness, and hates iniquity. Let God be esteemed, reverenced, honored, and obeyed: let love and good-will prevail, and be established among his subjects. Let every thing of a contrary savor be eternally banished his dominions; and God will be well pleased: but if any dishonor is done to the Deity, or injury to our fellow-subjects, nothing can displease him more; for there is nothing he hates like sin: it is "the abominable thing which his soul hates." Sin is more odious and detestable to him, than the most abominable thing on earth is to us. His aversion to it is vehement beyond the conception of any finite mind. His aversion to it is absolutely infinite. In this respect, therefore, sin is against God. It is a going directly contrary to his nature; and that in the most tender point; in a thing which comes nearest his heart. Nothing is so cross to him, nothing can disoblige him so much, or displease him, or grieve his heart, like this. As when a man's wife departs from him, and commits whoredom with another man, and breaks his heart by her ill carriage, so, says God, "I am broken with their whorish heart." * And therefore says he to his beloved people, If ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then, such a conduct would be so intolerably provoking, I will not, I cannot bear it, but I will walk contrary unto you also in fury. (Lev. xxvi. 27, 28.) But a sinful conduct is called a walking contrary to God, in Scripture, not only because it is thus in direct contrariety to the divine nature, but also because,

2. Sin is against the law, authority, and government of Almighty God;—for, as God hates sin with an infinite hatred,

* Ezek. vi. 9. I am broken with their whorish heart. From the covenant relation between God and his people Israel, they are said to be married unto him, (Jer. iii. 14;) and hence their going from God to idols is called whoredom. And to prefer an idol before the true God was a very provoking thing: therefore he says, I am broken with their whorish heart. But to prefer a vile lust before God seems to be in like manner provoking: it is a kind of spiritual idolatry. And yet this is done in every act of sin. No sin can be committed but God is grieved.

so he has with the utmost engagedness forbidden it; saying, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." As Governor of the world, he sets up himself against sin; forbidding it with all his authority, and standing ready to punish it with all his power; and it is even one main end of his universal government, to discountenance and suppress it, throughout all his dominions.

No doubt, Almighty God has right to govern the world; for originally he is absolute Lord of it; and by nature he is God most high; and his Godhead, and his Lordship, give him an undoubted right of government. And accordingly he has taken the throne, set himself up at the head of the universe, and undertaken the government of all things, and especially of the whole system of intelligences. And, no doubt, his government is worthy to be universally submitted unto; for it is all perfect and glorious. His laws and his dispensations are perfect in wisdom, rectitude, and goodness; and even as he himself is infinitely worthy of all love and veneration, so that his very being affords infinite ground of joy among his creatures, even so his government is just like himself, and exhibits his very image, and is worthy universally to be rejoiced in. As it is written, "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice."

Wherefore it is the fittest and happiest thing in the world, to be, and do, just what he requires; and in his favor, and under the protection of his almighty arm, there must be the most absolute safety and security. So that it might reasonably have been expected, that all his subjects, throughout all his dominions, would join to say, let God reign forever; and that they would all, with one heart, have exulted at the thought of being in subjection to such a King.

But the sinner comes in, and dissents from his whole constitution, and that both in heart and life. "As for his law," says he, "I do not like it, and will not obey it. As for his authority, I do not own it, and will not regard it. As for his universal government and glorious kingdom, it is not to my mind; — I revolt; — I will not have him to reign over me. I can prescribe better rules to live by. I will not be dependent on him, nor in subjection to him." Thus the sinner revolts from his government, casts off his authority, breaks his law, and in the language of Scripture, "rebels against the Lord." For, in Scriptrue, this is always considered as God's world; he our rightful Lord and King; and all our duty is enjoined, and all sin is forbidden, by his authority; and therefore every act of sin is considered as an act of rebellion against the Lord, and sinners have the character of rebels. (Deut. ix. 24.)

Now, inasmuch as God stands ready, at the head of the universe, to employ his infinite wisdom and almighty power to discountenance all rebellions, and suppress and crush all obstinate rebels, and maintain good government throughout his dominions; so that, things being thus, there is no way for the obstinate rebel to escape an eternal overthrow, and everlasting shame and contempt; it is therefore in his heart to wish the Almighty dethroned, his whole government overturned, and the sword of justice wrested from him. And had he sufficient power on his side, the latent temper of his heart would soon form into the terrible resolution; nor would he delay venturing on the dreadful attempt. Thus sin is against the law, authority, and universal government of Almighty God. Hence God esteems the sinner as his enemy; and accordingly sinners are called enemies to God, in Scripture, (Rom. v. 10. Col. i. 21;) and are said to be even enmity against him.* "And they are not," says the apostle, "subject to the divine law, neither indeed can be."

And this leads me to add, —

3. Sin is against the being of God. — For, since God is at the head of the universe, as was before said, and unchangeably determined to maintain good government throughout all his dominions, and possessed of an almighty, irresistible power, there is no hope that the obstinate rebel should escape punishment so long as God lives; for so long as God lives, God will reign; and so long as God reigns supreme, obstinate rebels cannot escape; for God's determination to punish sin is immutable as his very being; and therefore, if God lives, the impenitent sinner must die. But those who are enemies to God, had rather there should be no God, than that themselves should be punished.

When once a creature has become so vile and impious, as to revolt from the government of the Most High, and begin rebellion, and enter the lists against the Almighty, if left to himself, without any restraint, or hope of mercy, — and we know God was not obliged to open a door of hope to any rebel in his dominions, — and if armed with sufficient power to bear down

* Rom. viii. 7. The carnal mind is enmity against God. N. B. The apostle means here to give the character of every Christless sinner; for to be carnally minded, and to be in the flesh, is one and the same thing, in the language of the apostle; as is evident from ver. 8. But he looks upon all as being in the flesh, who have not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them; as is plain from ver. 9. And those who have not the Spirit of Christ, are none of his. Every Christless sinner is therefore in the flesh, and at enmity against God. This is the doctrine of St. Paul. And just thus God looks upon every unregenerate sinner, however they look upon themselves. And no wonder; for let subjects conduct so towards an earthly prince, as all unregenerate sinners do towards God, and their prince would look upon them as enemies. Read Luke xix. 14, 27.

all before him, we may easily guess to what length he would carry things. The same disposition which moved him to begin rebellion, would naturally excite him to go on. By his first act of rebellion, his life and soul are forever forfeited, according to law, and might justly have remained so. To repent, and undo what he had done, and humble himself, and sue for mercy, is what a sinner, in such a case, would never do. And as to the threatened punishment, he could never think of bearing that. He would venture upon the boldest and the most dreadful deeds, but that he would carry his point; deeds almost too dreadful to think of, and hardly fit to hint at. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," as it is written; and would therefore murder his brother, if left to his own heart, without any restraint, and having sufficient ability and opportunity in his hands; what then would the wretch do, who hates his Maker, is an enemy to his God, and even enmity against him? We see how a guilty world has treated the Son of God; we see how they have treated the prophets and apostles; and we may easily guess what dreadful work there would be, were the sinner an over-match for Omnipotency. Such is the inexpressible malignity of sin.

4. Sin is against the honor of God. — It is even despising the Lord, and treating the Most High with contempt. All his perfections are despised; and considered as our creator, preserver, governor, redeemer, and the fountain of all good, he is despised by sin.

Hear the contemptuous language of the sinner's conduct: — God sees you, O sinner, and will you dare to transgress? "Yes, his all-seeing eye shall not terrify me!" God is near at hand; you are in his very presence. O sinner, will you venture to offend? "Yes, God's presence shall not restrain me; I do not regard him so much." But he is girt with strength, and hath an almighty arm, and you are but a worm, without strength, and can make no resistance: will you dare to provoke him to jealousy? "Yes, I will do as I please; let him do his worst." But remember, he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. O, therefore do not that abominable thing, which his soul hates. "I care not what he loves, nor what he hates; I will please myself, let him take it as he will." But consider, he is unchangeably determined to render to every one according to their deeds, to him that doeth evil, tribulation and wrath; and who can stand before him when once he is angry? for our God is a consuming fire. Therefore, O sinner, forbear! "No, I will not be restrained; I will gratify my lusts, at all adventures; for I regard not his threats." But he is a Being of infinite goodness

and mercy, patience and forbearance; and this should lead you to a better mind, O sinner. "No, no; I despise his goodness, long-suffering, and forbearance; and I can be hard-hearted enough to go on, in spite of all his tender mercies." But, O sinner, infinite wisdom pronounces that this your way is your folly, and cries, Turn, O turn at my reproof, lest otherwise, ere long, I laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes: and will you not be dictated by the infinitely wise God? "No, no; I know what is best for myself, and that better than he does; and I choose to be my own director, and to walk in my own ways." But is he not the God that made you? have not his hands formed you? are you then your own? are you not the Lord's? and ought you not therefore to be for him? "I renounce the God that made me; I disown his right to me; I will not be for him, but for myself; for I will please myself, although he is grieved." But consider, he has nourished and brought you up tenderly, as his own child; and fed and clothed you all your life long; and will you be more sottish than the ox and the ass? "Yes, yes; after all, I will rebel against him." But how can you answer it, for he is your sovereign Lord and King; you are under his authority, bound by his law, and accountable at his tribunal; and you know what threatenings he has given out. And now, if you have any regard for him, in any respect, how dare you go on? "These things move me not. I will walk in the ways of my own heart, nor will I be controlled. I know not the Lord, nor will I obey him; and in the midst of all his thunders, I can be at ease in Zion, and chant to the sound of the viol." But if you go on thus to despise the Lord, and to despise his law, authority, and government, what will be your end, O sinner? will not his wrath wax hot, and smoke against you, and consume you? Consider, therefore, how that, after all this wickedness, he offers to be reconciled through Jesus Christ, and invites you to repentance: "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?"—and offers to be your God, and Father, and portion; and now, what answer do you make, O sinner? "Why, look on us, and observe our conduct, and you and all the world may see, that we make light of it, and go our ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise; whereby we plainly declare, that we despise the grace of the gospel, and had rather have the world for our portion than God himself." Thus God, in every point of light, is disesteemed, disrespected, despised, and even treated with contempt in the common conduct of the sinner.

Any vile lust is preferred before all the fulness of God. Those things and ways which please the devil, God's inveterate enemy, and the most malicious and hateful being in the uni-

verse, are chosen before those things and ways which please Jehovah, the greatest and best of beings. His authority is trampled on, at whose presence the mountains melt, and the earth trembles. A worm of the dust sets up himself above the most high God, and his will above God's, and his interest above God's glory. If God offers heaven, sin despises it; if he threatens hell, sin disregards it; if he pleads the dying love of his Son, and the riches of his grace, and beseeches the sinner to be reconciled, sin slights it all; or if he commands men to do their duty to one another, sin regards it not; and that notwithstanding his right to us as his creatures, and authority over us as his subjects, and our obligations to him as the Lord our God. And thus the Most High is by worms of the dust treated, with disrespect and contempt, and that to his face, and in the sight of the sun, in his own world, before his creatures, before his friends and enemies; tending to bring a public odium upon him and his ways, and to countenance and encourage rebellion throughout all his dominions, and sink him and his government into universal discredit, and bring an everlasting reproach upon his great name. Thus sin is against the honor of God.

5. Upon this view of things, may it not, in the last place, justly be inquired, whether sin be not against the happiness of God, and whether it does not open such a scene to his view, as naturally tends to grieve and distress such a being as God is?

To look down from heaven, the throne of his holiness and glory, upon this world, which he has made for himself; and survey all mankind, by nature his creatures, by right his subjects, designed to show forth his praise; and behold and see how they are revolted from his government, turned enemies to his majesty, and combined together in rebellion against his crown and dignity. They are set in a way which is not good, a way most contrary to his heart, full of impiety towards God, and injustice and cruelty towards one another. They disregard his laws, trample under foot his authority, despise his goodness, and bid defiance to his vengeance. And they are so much against him, that were their influence and power sufficient to carry the point, they would soon take the field. The tendency of their common conduct is, to dethrone his majesty, to overturn his government of the universe, to bring him into the deepest contempt, and every thing that is right and good unto the utmost disgrace, and to introduce disorder, confusion, and misery into his dominions, and rebellion, which should spread like a contagious pestilence throughout all his kingdoms, until all his subjects should revolt, and all join to treat him with hatred and contempt, and even wish him not to be.

And if the sun in the natural system should be extinct, and all the light turned into darkness, and the whole natural world flung into the utmost confusion; every orb displaced, every thing turned upside down; it would not represent half so dreadful and distressing a scene, as would immediately be opened to view, could sin, without control, and with power irresistible, bear down all good and right before it, and rise up to all to that height of wickedness and ruin, to which it naturally tends. And would not such a moral system of intelligences exhibit to view a sight infinitely distressing to such a being as God is, were it beyond his power and wisdom ever to regulate things? But to such a pass sin tends to bring the moral world.

So far as we are able to conceive, it seems essential to every intelligent being, to be liable to mental pain and distress, when they are crossed in the most tender point; — when their nature and will, interest and honor, and every thing that is dear to them, is counteracted and despised, and, as it were, trampled under foot; and they in the mean time unable ever to regulate things. So it is evidently with mankind; with bad and good. Ahab took to his bed, and refused to eat, because Naboth denied him his vineyard. Haman was grieved to the heart, because Mordecai would not bow to him. The chief priests were in anguish, because the apostles preached Jesus, and the resurrection, and filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. And rivers of waters ran down David's eyes, because men kept not God's law; for that was a tender point with him. And Jeremiah was ready to be so afflicted, if the Jews would not hearken to their duty, as in secret places to weep for their pride. And so it was with the man Christ Jesus; he was grieved and distressed at the hardness of men's hearts, and wept over the obstinate Jews.

And it is remarkable, that in Scripture, God is constantly represented as being affected in the same manner as men are; and such words and phrases are used as denote painful and distressing sensations, in order to set forth how he is affected with the vile conduct of his creatures. He is said to be grieved, wearied, to be made angry, to be provoked to wrath, to be vexed. "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation," says God, referring to the perverse conduct of the Israelites in the wilderness; unto whom, says he, "I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest." And again, "I am broken with their whorish heart." And, "I am presssd under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." All which are strong expressions, as used among men, to denote and set forth

pain, and distress of heart, at the sight of something exceeding grievous.

Not that we are to suppose, that He, who is "over all, God blessed forever," is indeed really pained and distressed at the sight of the shocking conduct of his rebellious creatures. For, although he has a full, comprehensive view of the whole of it, yet, at the same time, he as plainly foresees to what a result and issue all things will finally be brought, by his infinite wisdom and almighty power; whereby his authority and government will be but the more established throughout all his dominions, and his name and his law but the more revered. And although a number of obstinate rebels will be eternally miserable, under the punishment they justly deserve, yet, in the whole, God will be more glorious, and perhaps the system more happy too, than if sin had never been permitted, and misery had been forever unknown. Such power and authority has he over all things to order and overrule, and such is his wisdom, and such his holiness, justice, and goodness, that he both knows he can, and knows he will, finally bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, order out of disorder, and holiness, harmony, and peace, out of all the sin, confusion, and uproar; and all that has happened shall, through a long eternity, serve as a means, in the sight of all worlds, to establish his throne, confirm his government, make his law honorable, his justice appear tremendous, his grace glorious, and sin an exceeding great and dreadful evil. Therefore he enjoys a perfect tranquillity, and an undisturbed felicity, although a world of wickedness lies open to his view, and millions of things are transacted, which have a natural tendency to grieve him, (and that not merely forty years long, but from age to age, ever since the world began,) to "weary him;" to "vex his Holy Spirit;" to "break his heart;" to "press him as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves."

But no thanks to the sinner that God is happy. He is no friend to God's felicity. His ways tend to grieve and distress the Holy One of Israel; and that which is God's comfort is a terror to the sinner. He dreads the day when all things shall be set to rights; and when the Almighty will "ease himself of his adversaries, and avenge himself of his enemies." Thus we see how sin is against God; it is against his nature, law, authority, government, being, honor, happiness.

II. I am to show how great the evil of sin is on this account.

The evil of sin, as has been observed, arises from our obligations to do otherwise. And therefore the greater our obligations are to God, the greater is the evil of sinning against him.

Our obligations to love, honor, and obey God, originally arise from his worthiness to be loved, honored, and obeyed by us. But he is infinitely worthy to be loved, honored, and obeyed by us; therefore our obligations to do so are infinite; and so, to sin against him must be esteemed an infinite evil.

But it is quite beyond our capacity to comprehend the vileness there is in treating God as the sinner does; unless we could, as he can, comprehend all his greatness and glory, and fully see all the grounds and reasons there are for us to love, reverence, and obey him, and feel all their binding force. God is fully conscious to himself, that he is infinitely worthy of all love, honor, and obedience, for what he is in himself; besides that he is the Maker and Lord of the universe; the maintainer and upholder of the world, and rightful king, and sovereign over all. He is fully conscious there is infinite reason for us to rejoice in him, exult in his government, and be glad in his service; and that the contrary temper and conduct of his creatures is infinitely unreasonable and wicked. And although we cannot comprehend the exceeding vileness of rising in rebellion against the Most High, yet we may be easily convinced that it is an infinite evil. Yea, if we are but really convinced that God is infinitely great and glorious, it will be to us self-evident that he is infinitely worthy of all love, honor, and obedience; and that, consequently, to disesteem, despise, and disobey him, is infinitely vile. It is low and mean thoughts of God, which cause secure sinners to be insensible of the great evil of sin. Those heretics who deny the infinite evil of sin, do but, by the means, proclaim to the world their ignorance of the Deity. Had not God known sin to be an infinite evil, he would never have threatened an infinite punishment, even the eternal pains of hell, where the worm shall never die, and the fire shall never be quenched. And were not Christ, our compassionate Redeemer, sensible of the infinite evil of sin, he could never find it in his heart, at the day of judgment, to say to the wicked on his left hand, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." And were not all the hosts of heaven in the same sentiment, they would never join to say, "Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments; hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth;" when they see the smoke of their torments ascending forever and ever. Yea, were not the punishment apprehended to be justly deserved, it could not answer any of the good ends of punishment in the moral world; but would forever appear a great and dreadful blemish in the divine conduct, in the sight of all intelligent beings. God himself

could not approve of it, and would never do it. And therefore, notwithstanding it is so contrary to the natural sentiment of a heart secure in sin, yet we have sufficient matter of conviction, that there is really an infinite evil in sin, as it is against God. And when these heavens and this earth, which are now "kept in store, and reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men," shall all be in a flame, and melt with fervent heat, and the whole material system be dissolved and wrapped together, hurled into one general heap, perhaps to be everlastingly a lake of fire and brimstone for the punishment of the ungodly; I say, when God comes thus to show his wrath, and make his power known in the destruction of the wicked, it will make all intelligent creatures, in earth and hell, effectually sensible what an evil sin is, and how God stands affected towards it. This visible emblem of his wrath, this immense lake of fire and brimstone, will give an exact and infallible comment upon God's law, and show, beyond dispute, what the threatening means; nor will it any more, throughout eternal ages, at all be doubted whether sin be an infinite evil.

And thus we have taken a brief and general view of the evil of sin, as it is against God. We might indeed here enter into a great variety of particulars, and largely show how sin, as it is against God, is aggravated on many accounts; not only considering merely what he is in himself, but the relation he stands in to us, and we to him, our dependence on him, his right to us, his authority over us, the greatness of redeeming love, the freeness of gospel grace, etc. And it might be distinctly considered, how amazingly vile it is for such as we be, to treat such a one as God is, in such sort, under such circumstances, and notwithstanding such additional bonds and obligations lying upon us. But I must omit this.

III. I pass on to prove, that the great evil of sin consists in this, — that it is against God.

And this may easily appear. For a few words may soon make it evident, that although sin may really be a very great evil, as it is injurious to our fellow-men, or to ourselves, yet it is not so aggravated and heinous by infinite odds, in these respects, as on account of its being against God. To injure our fellow-creatures is wrong, very wrong; but what is a worm of the dust, compared to the living God? "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him," and some recompense may be made; "but if a man sin against the Lord, who will entreat for him?" or make any atonement for his crime. Yea, if by some act of sin we could do the greatest injury to the whole creation, yet what is the whole creation, compared

with God, the almighty Creator? It is all but as a dust of the balance, or a drop of the bucket. We may ruin ourselves by sin; we may plunge ourselves headlong into destruction; but what are we, compared with the great Jehovah? "Less than nothing, and vanity." And what is a guilty rebel worth, compared with the Majesty of heaven? To rise up in rebellion against the great God, go contrary to him, affront him, and treat him with contempt, is evidently the most wicked and heinous thing that possibly can be done. For here the greatest and best of beings is insulted; yea, a being who is infinitely better than all other beings put together. This is therefore the greatest evil there is in sin, by infinite odds.

And accordingly, thus we find the matter stands in Scripture account. When men are guilty of such wicked deeds as are injurious to themselves or to their fellow-creatures, yet, by God, the righteous Judge, they are blamed and punished for these sins, principally and chiefly, under the notion of their being committed against the Lord. Thus, when the Israelites were disheartened by the evil report of the spies, and refused to go up against the Canaanites, and talked of making captains, and returning to Egypt; although this conduct tended to disinherit themselves and their posterity of the land of Canaan forever, yet it is not on this account, chiefly, that they were blamed, and so dreadfully punished; nay, it is not so much as once mentioned, to aggravate their crime, or to show the justice of their punishment; but it was all because they had sinned against the Lord. God had said, that he would drive out the nations before them; but they would not believe him. God had commanded them to go up and take possession; but they would not obey him. They did not believe he would be as good as his word; they were afraid to run such a venture, as to trust his fidelity; they had rather rebel against his command, and return to Egypt. Wherefore God is represented as being greatly affronted and provoked, and as swearing, in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest. "As truly as I live, saith the Lord, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness." But why was God so angry? Because they had rebelled against the Lord, — would not believe him, nor hearken to his voice; that is, not because their conduct was to their own damage, but because it offered an affront to God; although it does not appear that they had acted with a design to affront the Almighty; but rather from a principle of self-preservation; just as sinners now-a-days do, who turn their backs upon the heavenly Canaan, and lust after the leeks and onions of Egypt, the pleasures of sin; not with any design to affront God, but

from self-love, and to gratify the desires of their hearts, all in pursuit of happiness. But yet really in fact they turn their backs upon the Almighty, and despise his commands; and for their offering this affront to the Deity, damnation is threatened, and not so much because they go contrary to their own interest. And so again, there is the instance of David, who, it is plain, had no design to affront the Most High; but first he meant to gratify his lust with Uriah's wife; and afterwards contrived to save his credit by taking away Uriah's life: yet observe his charge and his doom, from the mouth of the Lord: "Because thou hast despised the Lord, and despised the commandment of the Lord, and given the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme," therefore so and so will I punish you. Therefore says David to God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." See also that confession in Daniel ix. 9—12, and that large representation of the nature of what passed between God and his people of old, and the reasons and grounds of the judgments inflicted upon them, in Ezek. xx., throughout. The Scripture ever supposes, that all manner of sin, of what kind soever, is committed against the Lord, who is constantly considered as governor of the world; and therefore the sinner is viewed as a rebel. But to rebel against the Lord, is to despise him, and to despise his commands, in Scripture account. But to despise God most high, is infinitely more vile, than to injure such worms of the dust as we mortals; because God is infinitely greater and better.* This, therefore, is the great evil in

* *To despise God most high, is infinitely more vile than to injure such worms of the dust as we mortals; because God is infinitely greater and better.* — Therefore, 1. We are under infinite obligations to virtue, antecedent to any selfish considerations. And so, 2. There is an infinite evil in sin, over and above its natural tendency to promote the misery of ourselves or neighbors. And, consequently, 3. It deserves an infinite punishment to be inflicted over and above that pain which naturally results from it. And hence, 4. A rational account may be given of the eternity of hell torments. And, 5. We may see why such an atonement for sin was needful, as the blood of the Son of God. And now also, 6. We may see the true nature of the modern scheme of divinity. They say, our great obligation to virtue arises from its tendency to make us happy; therefore the great evil of sin consists in its tendency to make us miserable: and so sin is not an infinite evil; nor does it deserve an infinite punishment, nor with hell torments be eternal: nor was an infinite satisfaction to divine justice needful; nor, indeed, strictly speaking, any satisfaction to divine justice at all. So, no need of a God for our Redeemer: hence Christ Jesus was but a mere man; and the gospel only the religion of nature, republished and reënforced, etc. It is all because they know not the Lord. As it is written, "The fool saith in his heart, There is no God: corrupt are they." For, having no sense of God upon their hearts, or of the importance of his honor and glory, they are prepared to imagine, that the happiness of the creature is of the greatest importance of any thing in heaven or earth. As though the creature were better than the Creator; which is to make a God of the creature; which prepares the way, in their scheme, to make a creature of God, that is, of Jesus Christ, "who is over all, God

sin, which is respected, when temporal judgments are threatened in the Old Testament, and when eternal damnation is threatened in the New; so that it is evidently a point, every where in the Bible, taken for granted, that the great evil of sin consists in its being committed against God.

Having thus gone through with what was proposed, some remarks may be made, and then the whole be applied to our own use.

Remark 1. How different a thing is sin from what an apostate rebellious world naturally imagine. — How blind are we naturally to the infinite greatness, majesty, and glory of God. How insensible of the honorableness of the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, and of his worthiness to be loved, honored, and obeyed! If any of our fellow-mortals despise, affront, or injure us, they touch, as it were, the apple of our eye: but God — may be abused, and we take little or no notice of it. A thousand times men break his laws, and a thousand times they despise and affront him by their sinful doings; while they are possessed of such a prodigious degree of stupidity, as not to pass a single thought upon it. And should any charge them with despising the Lord, there are many would be ready to say, with those in Mal. i. 6, Wherein have we despised him? You despise God in your closets, in your family worship, in your public worship, and at the Lord's table: and yet, O secure sinner, will you still say, Wherein do I despise him? You give your choicest affections to idols, and offer the blind and the sick to the Lord: yea, a blind and a dead heart. Is it not burdensome to maintain secret prayer, and more tedious to spend an hour alone with God, than a whole day with vain company? And is not this to despise the Lord? Offer such treatment to your companions: let them see that you are weary of their company; even then when you are waiting upon them with pretences of the greatest respect; and will they accept it at your hands, or be pleased with your conduct? Besides, you are continually despising God in your daily course, by a disposition to take greater delight in the things of the world, and in the way of sin, than in the ever blessed God; and by a disposition to love yourself more than him; and be more concerned for your honor and interest in the world, than for God's glory, and the interest

blessed forever;" who yet, say they, is but a mere creature. For valuing themselves so high, and God so low, hence they see but little or no evil in sin as it is against God; and so feel little or no want of a Redeemer, or of an atonement; so no need of a God, to interpose and die in their behalf: a mere creature might answer all the ends needful; therefore they are prepared to think Jesus Christ was no more: and it is not what the Scripture says, but what suits with their own notions, which to them will appear true, or by them be believed.

of his son's kingdom. And you despise the Lord, and despise the commandments of the Lord, in every one of your thoughts, words, and actions, that are in any measure injurious to your fellow-creatures. — But such is the sottishness of a secure sinner, that he scarce passes a single thought upon it, for days, and weeks, and months, and years, how the infinitely glorious and ever blessed God is by him continually affronted and despised.

But turn the tables; let the secure sinner meet with abuses from his neighbors; let him be despised; let him be scorned; let even his inferiors treat him with contempt; let his name be cast out as evil by all men; let every man's hand be against him, to defraud him in their dealing with him, to disappoint him, and vex him; and now he will feel it; it will reach his heart; he will think of it night and day; aggravate it continually; and be ready to cry out, "Never was mortal abused as I am; never were there such wicked doings in the world before."

If God is despised, affronted, and abused, the sinner's heart is a heart of stone: he cannot feel it; for he does not care for God. But let it come to his own case; and his heart is a heart of flesh, very tender; as tender as the apple of one's eye: every thing touches him to the quick; for he loves himself dearly. If God is abused and injured, an apostate world care little about it: but if themselves are wronged, it is highly resented. Hence this is the doctrine of ungodly, selfish hearts, namely, — the great evil of sin consists in its being an injurious thing to us. — Nor, indeed, is it very strange that a rebellious world care so little for God's honor. For this is the nature and way of rebels in earthly kingdoms; when they have cast off their rightful sovereign, and turned enemies to him, they care not what becomes of him, nor how he is treated. Their only concern is about themselves, and to secure their own welfare; in order to which they may do many toilsome and heroic deeds, and call them by the name of virtue,* which virtue of theirs they may

* *Call them by the name of virtue.* — When Milton has represented Satan, the mighty chief among the powers of darkness, as willing, at all adventures, to undertake a voyage from hell to earth, in order to seduce man, and find out for themselves a habitation more comfortable than that burning lake, he introduces all the infernal crew, as paying a public honor to his virtue.

"——————————They rose:
——————————Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extol him equal to the highest in heaven:
Nor failed they to express how much they praised,
That for the general safety he despised

honor and reward, and labor to countenance and promote it; but it is all the while only to serve their own ends. And they are nevertheless a company of rebels, in the estimation of their rightful sovereign. The application is easy.

Remark 2. How amazing is the patience of God towards a rebellious, guilty world, and how astonishing the divine goodness, which sends rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness, when hell is their proper place, and the pains of the damned their just desert! God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, and beholds the work of his hands combined in rebellion against him, their rightful Sovereign; contemning his nature and will, despising his law and authority, and of a temper bad enough to dethrone him, and overturn his universal government, had they sufficient power on their side; and conscious to his own infinite glory, and to the reasonableness and excellency of his government, and the infinite obligations his creatures are under to him, he has an adequate idea of the infinite vileness of their temper and conduct, and of the infinite provocation they give him immediately to come out against them: yet he stays his hand; * he

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His own: (for neither do the spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites;
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.")
Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book ii. line 575.

And in the same page, in very beautiful lines, he intimates, what indeed is agreeable to our Savior's words, (Matt. xii. 25, 26,) that there is a great appearance of love and good agreement among devils: the kingdoms of this world are divided against themselves; but Satan's kingdom is not. — And elsewhere the following lines: —

"O, shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree,
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy;
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That, day and night, for his destruction wait."
Paradise Lost, Book ii. l. 496.

And yet the little appearance of public love, and public spirit, there is among mankind, although not so well united among themselves as devils be, is by some writers wonderfully applauded, as true virtue, and used as an unanswerable argument, to prove that mankind naturally have, in a measure, that moral image of God, which it is acknowledged the devils have totally lost; and that, notwithstanding we are represented in Scripture as being dead in sin — by nature children of wrath — enemies to God — enmity against him.

* *Yet he stays his hand.* — It is in Scripture attributed to the greatness of God's power, that he is able to contain himself, and to keep back his hand from

holds back destruction; he waits upon a guilty world from age to age; and feeds and clothes the wretches that affront him to his face.

Remark 3. How dreadful will the day of wrath be, and how miserable the state of the obstinate sinner, when God's patience shall be at an end, and his hand shall take hold on vengeance, and render a recompense to the wicked, equal to the infinite evil of their sins! If one sin, and the least sin, has so great an evil in it, and deserves so great a punishment, how dreadful must their state be, who have committed hundreds, and thousands, and millions of sins, and sins of the largest size, wherein they have cast the greatest contempt on the Most High, millions of times over! Their torments must be, not only eternal, but exceeding intense and very dreadful. The least sin deserves eternal damnation; every degree of guilt deserves a proportionable degree of punishment; the more guilty, the more miserable; the torments of the damned will therefore be not only eternal in duration, but most dreadful in degree. Hence it is written, that God will "show his wrath and make his power known" in their destruction. His power was made known in creating the heavens and the earth; and by the same power these heavens and earth, which are now kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, — I say, by the same power, which first created them, they shall at last be dissolved, burnt up, melted; and so be turned into a lake of fire and brimstone. And when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, all in a flame, and the whole material universe be hurled together in one general heap, then his power will be made known; and then he will show his wrath. Now, God is insulted and despised by worms of the dust; and yet is very bountiful to his enemies, and seems to take no notice of their affronts, as it is written, "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence." For now is the time for patience to reign; but when the day of wrath comes, God will let all the world see and know how infinitely vile it is for worms to rise in rebellion against the Most High. When the heavens begin to be on fire, and the elements to melt with fervent heat, a guilty world will begin effectually to be roused to a sense of what they have done. Now God will show his wrath; and now a rebellious world will feel their guilt.

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destroying the God-provoking sinner immediately. (Num. xiv. 17.) And had he not a strength and fortitude of mind infinitely great, it would doubtless be beyond him to bear with mankind a minute longer. Such infinite provocations would be too much for any but an infinite patience.

Remark 4. How far beyond the capacity of any finite creature is it to make amends to God for the least sin, which casts such an infinite contempt upon the Most High! A worm may rise in rebellion against the great Jehovah, and may despise God, and despise the commandments of God, and make a light matter of it; but if he would give "thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil," to make amends for his crime, it would not answer. Yea, if he would give "his first-born for his transgression, and the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul," it would not avail. It is easy for a haughty worm to despise the Majesty of heaven; but it is beyond the reach of all created nature to make a proper amends to God for such an injury. It is, even between man and man, easier to do wrong, than to undo it; but it is clean beyond the whole creation to make amends to God for the least sin, for it requires an infinite atonement. But if all finite creatures in heaven and earth should join together to do and suffer their utmost, it would not amount to any thing infinite. And besides, what can a creature do towards making the least degree of atonement for sin? For what he does must either be what God requires, or what God does not require. If it be what God does not require, God will not accept of it; for there is no virtue in it; and if it be no more than what God requires, it is no more than his duty. And his paying a present debt cannot atone for a fault that is past. The creature is not his own; he wholly belongs to God, and all that he hath; he has nothing therefore to give to God, but what is his own already. If he gives himself to God, wholly to God, it is the most that he can do; and yet he was wholly the Lord's before. It is beyond the capacity of the creature, therefore, to make the least degree of atonement for sin. He may justly lie under the whole guilt, and be exposed to the whole punishment of it, notwithstanding the utmost he can do. If ever he is saved, therefore, it must be by free grace through Jesus Christ.

Remark 5. How absolutely necessary was it that our Redeemer should be God! For otherwise, he could have nothing properly his own; and so nothing to offer to make atonement. But being by nature God, he is now naturally his own; and so may offer to God that which is his own, and that which is of infinite worth too. A being of infinite dignity can make an infinite atonement. And such an atonement it was that we needed. Without such an atonement, we must have perished. Therefore God "purchased his church with his own blood."

Remark 6. How great is the goodness of God, that he could find it in his heart to give his only-begotten Son to die for such

an apostate, rebellious, guilty race! — a race which had treated him so vilely, that in honor he could not pardon them: the honor of himself, of his holiness and justice, of his law, and government, and sacred authority, would not allow of their being pardoned; unless his own Son, equal to himself in power and glory, were set forth to be a propitiation for sin. A race, that are habitually inclined to despise him, cast off his government, walk contrary to him; and who, were they able, would soon join in the most impious attempt against his crown and glorious dignity. O that he could find in his heart to love and pity them; and this to so great a degree, as to give his only-begotten Son to die in their stead; and now, through him, offer to be reconciled, and invite them to return, and tender them pardon, peace, and eternal life: this is the most astonishing goodness!

APPLICATION.

Now, are you convinced of these truths? Do you look upon sin in this light? Are you sensible that all sin is thus against God, against his nature, law, authority, and honor? Do you know that this is God's world; that you are God's creatures and subjects; that he is your Lord and Owner; that he has an entire right to you, and an absolute authority over you; that you are entirely dependent upon him, infinitely indebted to him, absolutely under his government? And do you know, that the Lord your God is a great God, and a great King, infinitely worthy of all love, honor, and obedience? And do you see what a great evil it is to rise in rebellion against the Most High, slight his authority, throw off his government, break his law, go contrary to him, do the abominable things which his soul hates? Do you see what contempt this casts upon God, and how it tends to grieve his heart? For a worm to set up against the Almighty! For a creature, absolutely dependent, to turn his back upon his Creator, in whose hands his life and breath is, and whose are all his ways; to love sin more than the infinitely glorious God; to delight in earthly pleasures more than in the supreme fountain of all good; to be more concerned to please fellow-rebels and secure their favor, than to please the sovereign Lord of the universe, and secure his favor; — do you see the infinite malignity of such a conduct?

O sinner, if you never saw the great evil of sin, you are to this day a stranger to God, and blind to the infinite beauty of his nature; and are to this day under the power of sin, and in an impenitent and unpardoned state. Never was a sinner

pardoned while impenitent; never was a sinner truly penitent while insensible of the great evil of sin; and never did a sinner see the great evil of sin, before he was first acquainted with the infinitely great and glorious God. You may indeed have been sorry for sin on other accounts; as, that you have exposed yourself to shame before men; or hurt your estate; or brought God's judgments upon you in this life; or exposed yourself to his judgments in the life to come; or, perhaps, in times past, you have been greatly awakened and terrified, and then filled with joy, and even ravished, through a false, but confident persuasion your sins were pardoned; and in consequence of this, from natural gratitude, have felt real grief for your sins against God, considered merely as your great Benefactor.* But if you never saw the great evil of sin, as it is against a God who is infinitely glorious in himself, your repentance was never genuine, and you are yet unpardoned.

Here it may be observed, that if ever men were thoroughly convinced of this great evil of sin, the conviction would be permanent and abiding, for where true grace is ever wrought in the heart, it will continue. The water that Christ gives will be in us a never-failing fountain, "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Those, therefore, who were greatly terrified with their sin and guilt, some years ago, but have since learnt to make a light matter of sin, and can easily get quiet, and go on in their evil ways, they never truly saw the great evil of sin. Yea, I may add, that where true grace was ever wrought in the heart, it will not only continue, but increase; like the mustard-seed, which grows into a tree; and so a sight and sense of the great evil of sin will consequently increase and strengthen. For as men grow in the knowledge of God, and sense of his glory, and of their obligations to him, so, proportionably, will they see more and more of the infinite evil there is in sin, as it is against him. The case, therefore, may soon be decided against all those who were once awakened and enlightened, but have since fallen away, and returned "with the dog to his vomit," and with the "sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Their eyes never were truly opened; the heart of stone was never taken away; they never tasted the bitterness of sin to good purpose; and they are still the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity; and must return to their awakenings and sorrows again, in this world or in the world to come.

* That those religious affections, which men may have towards God, considered merely under the notion of a benefactor, are not of the nature of saving grace, is evident from Job i. 9, 10, 11, and Matt. v. 46.

Answer me to these six questions: —

1. Does God's government appear reasonable, and his law just? Behold, and see how God governs the world; observe how he looks upon sin, and how he treats it. The sinning angels, for their first transgression, are turned out of heaven, and doomed to an eternal hell. Our fallen world, too, but for the interposition of a Mediator, had sunk into eternal ruin. Every impenitent sinner will, at the day of judgment, be sentenced to depart to everlasting burnings. Now, does it appear reasonable that sin should be so severely punished? In heaven, they cry, "Hallelujah! just and righteous are thy judgments, Lord God Almighty!" But what is the language of your heart? Say, do you approve God's government, or be you an enemy to it? And, in all this, God does but proceed exactly according to law. For the law says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things." Now, do you heartily approve the law as strictly just, that threatens eternal damnation for the least sin? Does sin appear so great an evil, as to deserve, in all reason and justice, to be so severely punished? Put it to your own case; and can you justify God and his law?

2. Can you justify God in his present dispensations towards you? How are you actually affected under those chastisements which God inflicts upon you for sin in this world? When God told David that, for his sins, his wives should be defiled in the sight of the sun, the sword never depart from his house, and his child should die, penitent David says, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; wherefore thou art just when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest." And when afterwards he fled out of Jerusalem, from the face of Absalom, and Shimei cursed him, and said, "Come out, come out, thou bloody man," broken-hearted David said, "The Lord hath bidden him; let him alone." For he plainly saw he deserved it at the hands of God. And is it the native language of your heart, when God lays his hand heavy upon you — Righteous art thou, O Lord? Can you justify God in his dispensations towards you? God always in this world punishes us far less than our iniquities deserve; and a sight of the great evil of sin will effectually make it appear so to us.

3. Is it become natural to you, to look upon hell as your proper due, in such sort, as that every thing in your circumstances, wherein you are better off than the damned, appears as mere, pure mercy? Are you so vile and hell-deserving in your own account? Do you appear so in your own eyes as in the sight of God? And do you accordingly attribute all you

have, that is better than hell, to mere pure mercy, and go up and down the world, wondering at the goodness and patience of God? These things naturally arise from a sight of the great evil of sin.

4. Do you deserve eternal damnation now, to your own sense and apprehension, as much as ever you did? Be it so that you have been brought to true repentance for your past sins, and have been sincerely devoted to God for these many years, and that you live a life of penitency and godly sorrow from day to day, and enjoy sweet communion with God, and a sense of his favor; and have good hopes of eternal life; yet, considered merely as in yourself, in strict justice, what do you deserve at the hands of God? Do you deserve hell still, and do you deserve it as much as ever you did? Or does it seem as if you had made some amends for the sins of former years, by your repentance and piety since? Or does your daily repentance make any amends to God for your daily short-comings? If you see the great evil of sin, it will be a clear case to you, that you never did, nor ever can, make the least satisfaction to God for the least sin; and therefore, instead of imagining that you deserve better at the hands of God than once you did, you will naturally see that you grow more unworthy and ill-deserving. For, besides former transgressions, there are your daily short-comings, whereby you are continually meriting hell, without doing any thing, in the least measure, to make amends for what is past.

5. Do all your hopes of finding mercy at last, take their rise, only and absolutely, from the free grace of God, through Christ, as revealed in the gospel? St. Paul was doubtless one of the holiest men that ever lived; yet no man seems so sensible of his own vileness, and need of Christ and free grace. The law, says he, is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. O wretched man that I am! I am less than the least of all saints. By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified. And he ever looks to be justified by free grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He is concerned to be found, not in himself, having on his own righteousness, but to be found in Christ, having on his righteousness. In a word, it was his character to worship God in the spirit, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. And this, which was his character, will be your nature, if you really see the great evil of sin.

6. Is it become natural to you to be afraid of sin; of all sin, as the greatest evil? Are you afraid of secret as well as open sins; of sinful thoughts, as well as sinful actions; of an un-

gracious, unholy frame of heart, as well as an unholy life? Are you afraid of having your heart turn away from God, the fountain of all good; of losing a relish for secret prayer; of wandering thoughts on the Sabbath, and at sacrament? And are you afraid of whatsoever tends thereto; such as vain company, a merry way of living, love to the world, neglecting to watch the heart? Do you make conscience of walking with God, and of maintaining communion with the Most High, in your closets, and families, and in the house of God; or does not a round of duties, and form of religion, content you? Do you make conscience of loving your neighbor as yourself, and doing as you would be done by; paying your debts at the time agreed upon, and showing mercy to the poor? Do you make conscience of it to bridle your tongue, to avoid tattling, and acting as busybodies in other men's matters? Do you make conscience of it not to misspend your time in fruitless visits at taverns; in frolics, or in any other vain or unprofitable way; but to devote your time, and all your talents, to the service of God? If you see your obligations to God, you will make conscience of pleasing him in all things. If you see the great evil of sin, you will be afraid of it in every shape. If it appears to you as the greatest of evils, you will be most afraid of it. You will be more afraid of sin than of any worldly loss, or of any reproach, or shame, or suffering, or even of death itself. However it may be with a good man, for a fit, this is his habitual temper. Indeed, in general, men are but little afraid of sin; they will go into the way of it; they will run into temptations, to taverns, to frolics, to vain company; and care but little or nothing about the love of God, and secret prayer; no, nor so much as whether they are honest in their dealings, and true to their promises; and yet, alas! are ready to imagine themselves to be the children of God.

However, an habitual sense of the great evil of sin is so essential to vital piety, that, without it, men, let their past experiences and their present pretences be what they will, are but mere hypocrites. Their repentance is counterfeit, their faith is false, their religion is all unsound. If you know not the great evil of sin, you know nothing yet as you ought to know. You are a stranger to God, ignorant of your own heart, and of the deplorable condition you are in, and to this day are unhumbled, impenitent, and unpardoned. Wherefore, consider these things, answer these questions, and see, and say, what is your state.

O, how doleful is the state of secure, Christless sinners! At enmity against God; rebels against the Majesty of heaven;

their frame of heart and manner of life a continual despising the Lord, a grief to the Holy One of Israel, a constant provocation. And yet, alas! they know it not; nor does it once enter into their hearts: they go on at ease, and are merry, as though all were well; and little think what is just before them — the day of accounts drawing nigh; a day of darkness, of gloominess, and of thick darkness, and of great wrath.

Awake, O stupid sinner! look round; see what you do; see where you are; and consider what will be the end. Can your hands be strong, or your heart endure, O guilty rebel, when God Almighty shall come forth to deal with you according to your crimes?

Behold, now is a day of grace, and God is ready to be reconciled; a door of mercy is opened, by the blood of the Son of God; pardon and peace are proclaimed to a rebellious, guilty world. Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. But if, after your hardness and impenitent heart, you will venture to go on, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, you are like to know it, to your everlasting sorrow, that it is a fearful and horrible thing to sin against the Lord.

A BLOW

AT THE ROOT OF THE REFINED ANTINOMIANISM OF THE PRESENT AGE.*

THE principal design of writing on controverted points, is to assist the reader, by holding forth clear light, to come to a well grounded judgment touching the point in dispute. And to this end we should distinguish between things that differ; state the point in dispute with great exactness; and then present to the reader the arguments on the one side and the other, of the question in debate, and leave him to judge for himself. Accordingly, in these pages I shall, 1. Make some needful distinctions; the neglect of which has occasioned no small con-

* The author's title is, A Blow at the Root of the Refined Antinomianism of the Present Age, wherein that maxim, which is so absolutely essential to their scheme, that it cannot subsist without it, laid down by Mr. Marshal, namely, that in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it," thoroughly examined; Mr. Wilson's Arguments in its defence considered and answered; and the whole Antinomian controversy, as it now stands, brought to a short issue, and rendered plain to the meanest capacity. — "Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people."—Isa. lxii. 10.

ADVERTISEMENT. — In a piece, entitled, Letters and Dialogues, upon the Nature of Love to God, Faith in Christ, Assurance of a Title to Eternal Life, printed at Boston, New England, 1759, reprinted, London, 1761, Mr. Marshal's account of justifying faith was taken notice of, namely, that in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it;" and twelve queries were stated on the point. To vindicate that whole system of religion, which is founded in, and results from, this kind of faith, two volumes were printed in London, 1762, containing about three hundred pages, each; entitled Palæmon's Creed revived and examined. By David Wilson. This author, among other things, has undertaken to prove, that in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it." The following pages are designed as an answer to this gentleman, on that point. And if that point, which is essential to their scheme, and the root of all the mischief, can be proved to be wrong, their whole scheme is overthrown. This little pamphlet then means to bring to a short issue a controversy which has been the source of infinite mischief to the souls of mankind.

BETHLEM, *Jan.* 14, 1763. J. BELLAMY.

fusion, in this controversy, about the nature of justifying faith; 2. State the question now to be disputed, with great exactness; 3. Offer arguments against; and, 4. Consider the arguments in favor of the position, which contains the question in dispute; and then leave every reader to judge for himself. The distinctions to be made, are these: —

1. There is an essential difference between justification in the sight of God, and a persuasion in our own minds that we are justified. One is the act of God, our Judge; the other is the act of our own minds; as is self-evident. God's act must of necessity be, in order of nature, at least before our act. We must be justified before we can know that we are justified. For a thing must exist before its existence can be perceived. To say otherwise, is an express contradiction.

2. We are justified by faith alone, and that whether we know our faith to be of the right kind, or not. But we are assured of our justification, by a consciousness of our faith and other Christian graces, and by knowing they are of the right kind. We are justified without respect to any thing in us, or about us, considered as a recommending qualification; simply by free grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Our union with Christ is the foundation of our interest in him, his atonement and merits; and so of our title to pardon, justification, and eternal life, according to the gospel. Faith alone is that on our part whereby we are united to Christ, and become one with him, and so that alone by which we are justified. A consciousness in our own minds, that we have true faith, and those other Christian graces which are connected with it, and always accompany it, is that alone by which we can know that we are justified. So that while we are justified simply on the account of Christ's righteousness, we can know that we are in fact justified merely by a consciousness of our own inherent graces; even as a poor woman is made rich simply on her husband's estate, with whom she becomes one in the eye of the law by marriage: but she knows her title to her husband's estate, only as she knows that she was married to him, and actually continues to be his wife.

3. There is an essential difference between a full assurance, that those who receive Christ, and come to God in his name, shall be pardoned, justified, and have eternal life, and a consciousness that I do receive Christ, and come to God in his name, and am consequently pardoned, justified, and entitled to eternal life. That those who receive Christ and come to God in his name, shall be pardoned, justified, and have eternal life, is plainly and expressly revealed in the gospel, and was true

before I was born. And it appears to be true to every one, who understands the gospel aright, and believes it with all his heart. But I must actually understand the gospel, believe it with all my heart, and in the belief of it actually receive Christ, and come to God in his name, before I am justified; and so before I can be conscious to myself that I have so acted, and that consequently I am pardoned, justified, and entitled to eternal life.

4. Although justification in the sight of God must of necessity be in order of nature before our knowledge that we are justified; because a thing must exist before its existence can be perceived by the mind; yet it is not impossible that a justified believer may know his justification soon, from an inward consciousness of his receiving Christ, and coming to God in his name, and from a consciousness of all the Christian graces which are connected with and do always accompany true faith. At conversion, a sinner is "brought out of darkness into marvellous light," and "beholding the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image;" and may of course in the time of it, in all ordinary cases, be conscious of the change. And the greater the change is, the more conscious will he be of it. No man can prove but that divine light may possibly be imparted in so great a degree, and the change be so clear, that at once it may be known to be a saving change. I do not say, that it is always, or that it is ordinarily so, at present; but I am willing to grant that it may be so. From many expressions in the New Testament, I am inclined to think it was commonly so in the apostolic age. The three thousand, on the day of pentecost, not only received the word gladly, but immediately began to spend their time in praising God, (Acts ii. 41, 47,) and converts in that age, in general, being justified by faith, had peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. v. 1, 2.) "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye (one and all) rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Nor do we read of one saint in the New Testament who doubted of his being in a justified state; nor have we any reason, from the writings of the New Testament, to think but that assurance of their good estate was universally enjoyed by all true believers in the apostolic age.

This consideration inclines me to entertain charitable thoughts of the first reformers, that their hearts might be right, although it could be proved that they made assurance of the essence of faith; as it is affirmed by some that they did. For they were in the heat of dispute with the Papists, who denied that assurance was at all attainable in this life. Good men among the

first reformers might be conscious to themselves that they had had assurance from the very time of their conversion; and might observe from the apostolic writings that it used to be so with the apostolic converts, and might observe it to be so with their converts; and so, through want of proper attention to the nature of things, might be led to affirm, that assurance itself is of the essence of justifying faith; and by that one false maxim, be insensibly led into many other mistakes. But the Assembly of Divines, at Westminster, who sat about a hundred years after the reformation, time having been had meanwhile to look more carefully into things, and to distinguish between things that differ, left assurance out of their definition of justifying faith, in their confession of faith—Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Nay, they even expressly affirm, in their Larger Catechism, in answer to question eighty-one, "That assurance of grace and salvation are not of the essence of faith." For while it was affirmed that assurance was of the essence of faith by the Protestant preachers, two things would constantly happen, it may reasonably be supposed, which would tend to convince them that they were wrong, namely: First, many of their seeming converts, who appeared to be full of the strongest assurance of the pardon of their sins, would apostatize and fall away to open wickedness, before their eyes; as it has been with many in our day: Secondly, their adversaries, the Papists, who hated all assurance of salvation in general, as some do in our day, would take the advantage of their mistake, and make such objections against them, as they could not answer; which, when the heat of the controversy was a little over, and the Protestant party had had time impartially to weigh things, (loath as men naturally are to give up a point they have once espoused,) they would feel themselves obliged to do it in this case. Accordingly it came to pass, within about a hundred years, that Protestant divines in general gave up that notion, and defined faith in a very different manner; as we may see in the confession of faith and catechisms of the assembly of divines at Westminster, and yet retained the doctrine of assurance, and asserted it in the strongest language, but not as being of the essence of faith, but as resulting "from the inward evidence of those graces, unto which the promises are made."

And in New England, which was settled about that time, that notion has been, from the very first settlement of it to this day, universally exploded by all our divines of note. Nay, I never heard of but one single minister in New England, who appeared in print to defend the notion, that assurance is of the essence of faith; and he is a minister over a separate congre-

gation; and testimony has been publicly borne against him in years past, by some of the most noted ministers in the country. In Scotland, when this notion was above forty years ago advanced and propagated among them by some who have since separated themselves from that church, it was condemned by the General Assembly of the church of Scotland, as being contrary to the word of God, to their confession of faith and catechisms; and all their ministers were strictly prohibited, under the pain of the censures of that church, by writing, printing, preaching, catechizing, or in any other way, to teach this, and the other doctrines in connection with it.*

These things are not said to determine what is truth, by the names and influence of fallible men: to do so, would be to justify the whole Popish party in their appeal to the pope, to decide all points of religion; and to give up the first maxim on which the reformation was built; namely, that the word of God is the only rule of faith and manners. It is not what the first reformers said, nor what the Assembly of Divines said, nor what any other men or body of men, since the apostles were dead, have said, or do say, that can determine any doctrine of religion, or settle any point of controversy about religion. If they cannot be settled by the Holy Scriptures, they must remain forever undetermined in this world. To be unwilling to appeal to the Bible, and to that alone, to determine what is truth, is a full proof a man is at heart an infidel. He does not really believe that the Bible is the word of God, nor does he build his scheme of religion upon it; but upon his own experiences, or the sayings of others, whose experiences he imagines were like his own. However, what has been said, may let the public see how I can consistently entertain an opinion, that some men's hearts may be more orthodox than their heads in this matter; which was the point I was upon.†

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* See the acts of the General Assembly of the church of Scotland, 1720, Act v., and 1722, Act vii. Particularly these words, out of a book entitled the Marrow of Modern Divinity, were expressly condemned, namely, "wherefore as Paul and Silas said to the jailer, so say I unto you, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved; that is, be verily persuaded in your heart, that Jesus Christ is yours, and that you shall have life and salvation by him, that whatsoever Christ did for the salvation of mankind, he did it for you; forasmuch as the Holy Scripture speaketh to all in general, none of us ought to distrust himself, but believe that it doth belong particularly to himself." These words were expressly condemned, as making saving faith consist in "a man's persuasion that Christ is his, died for him," etc.

† It is very observable, that Mr. Wilson, who is constantly repeating it, that all the Protestant world are on his side, and glorifying in it, is obliged, in the midst of it all, to own, that while some hold that assurance is of the essence of faith, others only maintain that assurance accompanies it, (p. 97) — two things in their nature essentially different, nay, contrary to each other. For to say,

But while true converts may, from their first conversion, from a consciousness of the saving change they have passed through, be persuaded that they are in a state of favor with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, Satan, that great enemy to all good, may transform himself into an angel of light, and delude hundreds, and thousands, and ten thousands, (and it is foretold that Satan is to deceive the nations, till the thousand years of Christ's reign do commence, Rev. xx. 3,) with a firm belief that their sins are forgiven, who never were converted; and so oblige them to believe their sins are forgiven, when, according to the plainest declarations of Scripture, they are not forgiven; and so necessitate them, in order to vindicate themselves, to assert that in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it, and that without any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason."

And these false converts, imboldened by the greatness of their number, may rise, sketch out a whole new scheme of religion, subversive of Christianity, and seek to propagate it through the Christian world, showing the greatest rancor against the true gospel of Christ. Meanwhile, true Christians may get bewildered, and some perhaps brought unawares to espouse the language of the deluded, and to seem to plead their cause. And the common enemies to all experimental religion may rejoice, in hopes it will finally appear to all the world that there is nothing in vital piety, that all religion consists in an external regular behavior; and that it is no matter what men's principles be, if their lives are but good; which is nothing better than downright infidelity.

The way may now be prepared to state the question in dispute.

In the beginning of my third Dialogue,* which was on the nature of assurance of a title to eternal life, I had said, that "sanctification, taking the word in a large and comprehensive sense, is the evidence, the only Scripture evidence, of a good estate." And to prevent misunderstanding, I added, "It is usual for divines to distinguish between regeneration and conversion, between first conversion and progressive sanctification; between divine views and holy affections, between grace in the heart and a holy life and conversation; but I mean to comprehend all under one general name. You may call it the image of God, or holiness of heart and life, or a real conformity to the divine law, and a genuine compliance with the gospel of Christ;

that assurance accompanies faith, is to say, "it is not faith, but something else which true believers are wont to have in company with faith."

* Theron and Aspasio, vol. ii.

I have already let you see what I apprehend to be the nature of law and gospel, of love to God and faith in Christ. When I say, this is the only evidence, I mean that this is the only thing wherein saints and sinners, in every instance, differ. One has the image of God, the other has not; or, to express myself in the language of inspiration, "This is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him."

In answer to which words, Mr. Cudworth says, this "is no other than the assurance of the Pharisee." * But why? Because, says he, "it is only founded on the difference there is between him and other men." To which I reply, this may as well be objected against the assurance of all the apostolical saints; as is evident from 1 John ii. 3—5, the very text I quoted. For they knew they loved God, and kept his commands, while the rest of the world lay in wickedness. And therefore they said, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." And will Mr. Cudworth affirm that their assurance was that of the Pharisees? Besides, there is a fallacy in his words; for the apostolical assurance did not arise merely from a consciousness that they differed from others, which might be true, and yet they have no grace, as was the case with the Pharisee; but from a consciousness that their characters were agreeable to the gospel standard; that they had those graces which, according to Christ's holy religion, are peculiar to the saints, and certainly connected with eternal life. Upon this their assurance was built, just as I had represented. However, if Mr. Cudworth's words prove nothing else, yet at least they seem to be a sufficient evidence of his hearty disaffection to the only scriptural assurance of a good estate. And he appears to think, with his late friend, that we may as well "place the dome of a cathedral on the stalk of a tulip," as place our assurance on this only scriptural foundation. But how, then, would he have us get assurance? Even by believing that our sins are forgiven, while conscious that we are upon a level with the worst of sinners; no difference between us and them as dead in sin, as impenitent and unconverted, and as full of enmity to God. And this belief is to beget

* Further Defence, p. 265.

our first love. But, alas! what grounds have we for this belief? What evidence for the truth of what we believe? Why, none at all, says Mr. Marshal, "from Scripture, sense, or reason;" for the fact believed to be true "is not true before we believe it."

And as Mr. Cudworth affirms assurance from a consciousness of sanctification to be the assurance of the Pharisee, so his brother, Mr. Wilson, with the same spirit, affirms it to be the assurance of Papists, perhaps a hundred times over; * although he well knew that the Papists join with Antinomians in denying that a certain assurance from a consciousness of our own sanctification is attainable in the present life; † how, then, would Mr. Wilson have us get assurance? Even by believing our sins are forgiven, without any consciousness of any grace in us, "without any reflection upon the act of appropriation made by the believer, or a persuasion of the truth of his own faith," (p. 123;) "without knowing any thing further about their state, than that they are by nature children of wrath and heirs of hell, under the curse of an angry, sin-revenging God," (p. 175.) These are his own words.

* See Mr. Wilson's Review of Palæmon's Creed, vol. ii. p. 101, and elsewhere through both his volumes. N. B. The particular references to Mr. Wilson, which will be made in these sheets, will be to his second volume, in which he has made some remarks on my Dialogues. I here give notice of it once for all.

† Page 104, Mr. Wilson says, speaking of the Papists, "As it is supposed, that men will frequently have too much reason to suspect the sincerity of their own love and obedience, whether the former be genuine, and the latter such as God will accept of, they granted that any hope of salvation men can attain to in this mortal state, must, and ought, still to be mixed with fear and doubting. They never can attain to any absolute certainty about it. Such were the leading sentiments of the most eminent teachers in the Romish church."

And how exactly agreeable these sentiments are to the sentiments of the most eminent teachers of Mr. Wilson's party, the following words of the celebrated Mr. H—y will show: "This method of seeking peace and assurance, I fear, will perplex the simple-minded, and cherish rather than suppress the fluctuations of doubt. For, let the signs be what you please, a love of the brethren, or a love of all righteousness; a change of heart, or an alteration of life; these good qualifications are sometimes like the stars at noonday, not easily, if at all, discernible; or else they are like a glowworm in the night, glimmering, rather than shining; consequently will yield, at the best, but a feeble, at the worst, a very precarious evidence. If, in such a manner, we should acquire some little assurance, how soon may it be unsettled by the incursions of daily temptations, or destroyed by the insurrection of remaining sin! At such a juncture, how will it keep its standing? how retain its being? It will fare like a tottering wall before a tempest, or be as the rush without mire, and the flag without water.

But while Papists and Antinomians thus join to deny any certain assurance by our own inherent graces, the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, agreeable with the Holy Scriptures, strongly assert it. — Conf. of Faith, chap. xviii. "Such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, etc., may in this life be certainly assured that they are in a state of grace." — "This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made."

But how shall we know that our sins are forgiven? Are our sins forgiven while we are in an impenitent, unconverted, Christless state? Are they forgiven even while we are "heirs of hell, and under the curse of an angry God"? that is, forgiven when they are not forgiven — an express contradiction — or are we to believe they are forgiven, when in fact they are not forgiven? Yes, this is the very thing Antinomians formerly held; that the elect are justified from eternity, or from the resurrection of Christ, and that in due time their justification is manifested to them by the Spirit, on which they commence believers. And this scheme, how contrary soever to the Bible, was consistent with itself. But that scheme is new modelled; and now they say, that in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it." This Mr. Marshall had said; and Mr. Wilson undertakes to vindicate it, (p. 14,) pretending full assurance that the whole Bible and all the Protestant world are on his side.

Mr. Cudworth was affrighted and shocked at the thought of "believing that to be true which is not true before we believe it," without any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason, after I had shown the absurdity of it in the twelve queries in my second Dialogue.* He felt he could not answer my reasoning. He was afraid. He durst not look the point fairly in the face. He turned his eyes and buried himself in obscurity in the midst of a multitude of ambiguous words; and, to pacify his credulous reader, says, that I misrepresent their scheme; when he, at the same time, knew that I had represented it exactly as Mr. Marshall, a writer highly celebrated by all their party, had done. See his further defence, p. 246.

But Mr. Wilson is a man of courage; he thinks he can maintain the point: he sees it must be done, or their whole scheme be given up. He has tried; he has doubtless done his best; and this is the very point now to be examined, namely, whether, in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it?"

A position in itself so evidently absurd, that were it not made use of to deceive multitudes of precious souls, it would not deserve the least attention of any man of sense. But matters being as they are, it is worth while to examine it. This position evidently lies at the foundation of their whole scheme; and if this single position is false, their whole scheme is false; for they all affirm that our sins are not forgiven before we believe they are forgiven; and that in the first direct act of

* Theron and Aspasio, vol. ii.

justifying faith we believe they are forgiven. And therefore it is, and must be, a fundamental maxim with them, upon the truth of which their whole scheme depends, that in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it."

No writer I ever saw has expressed the matter with such undisguised honesty and simplicity, as their celebrated Mr. Marshall, whose Gospel Mystery of Sanctification they profess to value next to the Bible. Let us therefore hear his own words; look into their plain and natural meaning, and state distinctly the point to be disputed.

Mr. Marshall's words are these, and the more we think of them, the more remarkable will they appear: "Let it be well observed, that the reason why we are to assure ourselves in our faith that God freely giveth Christ and his salvation to us in particular, is not because it is a truth before we believe it, but because it becometh a certain truth when we believe it; and because it never will be true, except we do in some measure persuade and assure ourselves that it is so. We have no absolute promise or declaration in Scripture, that God certainly will or doth give Christ and his salvation to any one of us in particular; neither do we know it to be true already by Scripture, or sense, or reason, before we assure ourselves absolutely of it; yea, we are without Christ's salvation at present, in a state of sin and misery, under the curse and wrath of God. Only, we are bound by the command of God thus to assure ourselves; and the Scripture doth sufficiently warrant us that we shall not deceive ourselves, in believing a lie; but according to our faith, so shall it be to us. (Matt. ix. 29.) This is a strange kind of assurance, far different from their ordinary kinds; and therefore no wonder if it be found weak and imperfect, and difficult to be obtained, and assaulted with many doubtings. We are constrained to believe other things on the clear evidence we have that they are true, and would remain true, whether we believe them or no; so that we cannot deny our assent, without rebelling against the light of our senses, reason, or conscience. But here our assurance is not impressed on our thoughts by any evidence of the thing; but we must work it out in ourselves by the assistance of the Spirit of God."—Mystery, p. 173, 174.* In this plain, honest declaration, which opens to clear view the heart and soul of their whole scheme, these eight things may be observed.

1. In general, that "this is a strange kind of assurance, far

* New York edition, p. 167.

different from other ordinary kinds." In all other kinds of assurance, he observes, there are these two things: First, What we believe "is true before we believe it, and whether we believe it or no." Second, "We are constrained to believe, on the clear evidence we have that they are true." But "this is a strange kind of assurance, far different from other ordinary kinds," in these two respects: First, As we believe "that to be true which is not true before we believe it; and never would be true, if we did not believe it." Second, As we believe "without any evidence of the thing"—any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason." Herein the strangeness consists, and its difference from all other kinds of assurance in the universe.

A true convert gets assurance thus: the word of God teaches, (John i. 12,) that he who receives Christ, and believes in his name, is a child of God; but I receive Christ, and believe in his name, therefore I am a child of God. Again, the word of God teaches, (Acts iii. 19,) that he who repents and is converted, shall have his sins blotted out; but I repent and am converted; therefore my sins are blotted out. Once more, the word of God teaches, (Acts xvi. 31,) that he who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved; but I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore I shall be saved. This is the "ordinary" way of getting assurance. And the things believed are true before we believe them; and we believe only in exact proportion to our evidence.

But in "this strange kind of assurance," a sinner who as yet is impenitent, unconverted, has not received Christ, nor believed in his name, but is "under the wrath and curse of God," believes his sins are forgiven; not because they are, for they are not; not because he has evidence they are, for he has none; but full evidence to the contrary; but, say they, because God has commanded him to believe that they are forgiven, and promised that if he believes they are forgiven, they shall be forgiven. That is, God has commanded him to believe what is not true, and promised that if he believes that which is not true, it shall become a truth. "According to our faith so shall it be to us." Not that that text in Matt. ix. 29, speaks a word about "this strange kind of assurance;" for it does not. The thing the two blind men believed was true before they believed it; and they were constrained to believe by clear evidence; namely, that Christ was able to open their eyes. (See ver. 27, 28.) No. This kind of assurance is so strange, that it is not so much as once required, commanded, exhorted to, or recommended in the Bible; nor any thing like it. Nor indeed is there any thing

like it in the universe. For it is in truth "a strange kind of assurance, far different from other ordinary kinds." But to be more particular; and that even those who are of the weakest capacity may not only think, but be quite certain, that we do not misunderstand this author, so very highly celebrated by gentlemen of the first rank on that side of the question, observe, —

2. The thing to be believed is a supposed fact, which has no existence, namely, "that God freely giveth Christ and his salvation to us in particular." Which, he says, "is not true before we believe it." But pray, what does he mean by God's "giving Christ and his salvation to us in particular"? We often read in the Bible of the gift of Christ; but every thing taught in the Bible relating to that grand and glorious affair, is true before we believe, and whether we believe or no. For instance: is it not true, whether we believe it or not, that God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life? And are not those words true, whether we believe them or not, that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"? And again, were not those words true, whether the Jews believed them or not, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven"? Yes; beyond all doubt all these things are true, and every single sentiment implied in them is true, has been true above these thousand years, and will remain true, whether we believe them or not. And indeed this is the case with all the truths contained in the Bible; yea, with every single truth in the universe. They are true before we believe them, and whether we believe them or not.

What, then, does Mr. Marshall mean, by God's "giving Christ and his salvation to us in particular"? Which, he says, "is not true before we believe it." Not that giving of Christ we read of in the Bible; but something essentially different. He plainly means giving us in particular a saving interest in Christ and his salvation; granting us pardon, justification, and a title to eternal life, while impenitent and unconverted. This is plain from what he considers as opposite thereto. "Yea, we are without Christ's salvation at present, in a state of sin and misery, under the wrath and curse of God." Which words determine his meaning with the utmost certainty. So that the fact to be believed to be true, is this: that we have a saving interest in Christ, are delivered from "the wrath and curse of God," are pardoned and entitled to eternal life; and indeed this is no more than Mr. Wilson, and all others in his scheme, hold that we do believe in the first direct act of justifying faith; and

without which they all affirm our faith is not saving. Mr. Wilson affirms this over and over again, perhaps a hundred times, through both his volumes; particularly, p. 145, he defines justifying faith in these words: "Justifying faith is a believing the remission of sins with special application to a man's self." Now observe, —

3. Mr. Marshall says, "This is not true before we believe it." But had it been declared, expressly or implicitly, in the word of God, it had been true before we believe it, and whether we believe it or no: for this is the case with every declaration in the Bible. But Mr. Marshall is so open, frank, and honest, as to own that it is not taught in the word of God. "We have no absolute promise or declaration in Scripture, that God doth or will give Christ and his salvation to any one of us in particular; yea, we are without Christ's salvation at present, under the wrath of God." Therefore, —

4. The thing to be believed to be true, instead of being true before we believe it, is false; yea, is known to be false, is owned to be false, is publicly declared before the world to be false. Instead of our having a saving interest in Christ, we "are under the wrath and curse of God." And therefore this honest man, in perfect consistence with himself, declares, —

5. "Neither do we know it to be true already by Scripture, or sense, or reason:" our assurance is not "impressed on our thoughts by any evidence of the thing." And indeed, nothing could be more absurd and self-contradictory, than to pretend, as some of the party seem to do, to have any evidence of the truth of a fact, which is known and acknowledged not to be true. For if we not only think, but know, that it is not true, we know that there is evidence of its untruth. Not simply no evidence of its truth; but full demonstration of its falsehood.*

* Mr. Marshall's meaning is so plain, that it seems impossible it should be any plainer. And these words did not drop from his pen inadvertently; but the plain truth of the case drew them from him. For he has said nothing but what is absolutely essential to their scheme. He knew it was so; and he had honesty enough to own it. True, Mr. Cudworth was sensible he could not vindicate the scheme, set in this open, honest light: therefore he, absolutely, without any grounds, pretends I misrepresent their scheme; and then buries up himself in a heap of ambiguous words, without attempting to answer my queries upon the point. But I appeal to all men of common sense, into whose hands this shall come, whether I do not understand Mr. Marshall's words in the sense, the very sense, the only sense, they can possibly bear. It is plain beyond dispute, that Mr. Wilson understands them in the very sense I do; for, as we shall see presently, he maintains that in justifying faith, "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it." Well, if it is not true, it is false. And if it is not true, it implies a contradiction to say, that there is "any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason," of its truth. And therefore, if it be believed at all, it must be "without any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason," as Mr. Marshall honestly owns.

But how a man, not given up to delusion, can believe that to be true, which he certainly knows is false, may puzzle a Locke or Newton to say. However, Mr. Marshall goes on to declare,—

6. That herein lies the great difficulty of believing, not as it is with divine truths, because the thing to be believed is contrary to our vicious biases, (John iii. 19,) but merely because we have no evidence of its truth, but full demonstration that it is false. "This is a strange kind of assurance, far different from other ordinary kinds; and therefore no wonder if it be found weak and imperfect, and difficult to be obtained, and assaulted with many doubtings." But pray, wherein does it differ from all other kinds of assurance; and why is it so difficult to be obtained? He goes on to say, "We are constrained to believe other things on the clear evidence that we have that they are true, and would remain true whether we believe them or no; so that we cannot deny our assent without rebellion against the light of our senses, reason, or conscience: but here our assurance is not impressed on our thoughts by any evidence of the thing." And on this account, and merely on this account, is it difficult to believe this fact. For there is no man but that would be glad to believe, that instead of going to hell after death, he shall be forever happy in heaven. Balaam said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his." So that wicked men would be glad to get this faith; and if they cannot get it, it is not because they are not willing to have it, as was the case with the wicked Jews, whom Christ upbraided,—"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life;" but merely because they have not "any evidence of the thing." So, then, they are not to blame for their unbelief; for it is no crime; rather they are to be pitied; for it can be considered only as a calamity. And accordingly, several writers have of late appeared in Great Britain, zealous to prove that faith is no duty, and unbelief no sin.

Thus far, then, Mr. Marshall's words are plain, and we cannot mistake his meaning: but the next particular is not without some difficulty. For,—

7. He says, that the fact not being true, but rather known to be false, and so there being no evidence of any kind, or from any quarter, to build our faith upon, we must therefore "work it out in ourselves by the assistance of the Spirit of God." But how can a man, in his right senses, go about to work up himself to believe that to be true which he knows is not true, but absolutely false; and which way does a man go to work in this case? He does not look for evidence; for he knows there is none from Scripture, sense, or reason; nay, he does not try to

believe it to be true, as supposing it true; for he knows it is not true. But he tries to believe it is true, that it may become true by his believing it to be true. Surprising, shocking affair!

And all this "by the assistance of the Spirit of God." But pray, how can the Spirit of God grant any assistance in such a case? Were the fact true, and were there evidence of its truth, we should need no assistance in the case. A wicked man is as able, and as willing, to believe such a fact, as any saint in the world. And since the fact is known not to be true, and it is known there is no evidence of its truth, but full demonstration of its falsehood, what assistance can the Spirit of God grant in the case? The Psalmist prays, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." And if our vicious biases render us inattentive to, and prejudice us against, divine truths, so that we are slow of heart to believe them to be, what in fact they are, whether we believe or no; or if we "hate the light because our deeds are evil," if we hate the truth because it condemns us, we may need the influences of the Divine Spirit to remove our prejudices, to open our eyes, to make us attentive to, and give us a relish for, the truth, to cause us to savor the things which be of God; and so long as any corruption remains in our hearts, to blind our minds to the holy beauty and glory of divine truths, we may need the Divine Spirit to open our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of God's law. But in this case, there is no prejudice in the heart of the most wicked man in the world to be removed; for the fact believed would have suited Balaam himself. And it can be of no advantage to have our eyes opened in the case; but rather a disadvantage. For the wider our eyes are opened, the more plainly and clearly shall we see, that it is not true, but absolutely false; that there is no evidence of its truth, but full demonstration of its falsehood. There is nothing in the case, therefore, to be done by any spirit for us, but to put out our eyes, and blind our minds, that so we may, by the mighty power of delusion, be led firmly to believe a lie. But surely, no spirit will do this for us, but that wicked spirit who is the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning. He may bring texts of Scripture to us, as once he did to our Savior, and apply them to our souls, one after another, till, ravished with joy, we cry out, "I know my sins are forgiven — I know God loves me — I know I shall be saved — I am as certain of it, as of my own existence; and should all the world say I am deluded, I would not regard them!" I have been particularly acquainted with many instances of sinners thus deluded. Num-

bers of our converts in New England, twenty years ago, were to all appearance converted thus.

Thus we have taken an impartial view of Mr. Marshall's doctrine, the very doctrine Mr. Wilson has undertaken to vindicate; and for a complete stating the question to be disputed, there is but one observation more to be made.

8. A fundamental maxim in Mr. Marshall's scheme, on which all the rest depends, — I say, a fundamental maxim in Mr. Marshall's whole scheme is, that in justifying faith "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it." And this maxim is absolutely essential to his scheme. For the fact believed is, that "my sins are forgiven," or, in other words, "that I have a saving interest in Christ and all the benefits purchased by him." Now, if they say, that this is true before I believe it, they must, with the grossest sort of Antinomians, hold that we are justified before faith, in express contradiction to the whole gospel. This they do not, they dare not say. They are therefore under an absolute necessity to say, "that we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it."

But if it is not true before we believe it, then every thing Mr. Marshall has said will inevitably follow; for if it is not true, it is false. If it is not true, there is, there can be, no "evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason," that it is true; and therefore we must believe "without any evidence of the thing." And so it is "a strange kind of assurance," and "difficult to be obtained," and we must "work it out in ourselves." And it being so contrary to common sense, even to the reason of all mankind, to believe that to be true which we know is not true, we evidently need the assistance of some spirit in the affair. Not the Spirit of God indeed, for he never helps men to believe any thing but what is true before we believe it.

If therefore it can be proved, that this fundamental maxim is false, down goes their whole scheme, and all who are settled upon it lie buried in its ruins.

1. It is self-evident, that, in all instances, a thing must exist, at least in order of nature, before its existence can be discerned by the human mind. To say otherwise, is an express contradiction. For to discern that a thing exists before it does exist, is to see that it is before it is; which is the same as to say that a thing may be, and not be, at the same time, which is an express contradiction.

But to believe my sins are forgiven, is to discern that this fact is really so, that this thing does exist. Its existence, then, is in order of nature, before I discern its existence; for to

say I can see a thing to be, which is not, is an express contradiction. So then they must say, we are justified before faith, or their faith is an inconsistent, self-contradictory thing.

I am well aware that this sort of converts, in their inward experiences, are wont to have the love of God and pardon of sin, to their apprehension, manifested to their souls before they believe. For this manifestation is the ground of their belief; and indeed it would be simply impossible they ever should believe, if they had not something of this nature. For no human mind can believe what appears to be not true. But it will not do to speak out this secret, and tell the world plainly how it is; for then it would appear that they are justified before faith, and all would join to condemn them as gross Antinomians. And therefore they are obliged to give such an account of their faith, as in its own nature evidently implies a contradiction. Nor can you get one of these men coolly and impartially to attend to this point, because they are conscious of an insuperable difficulty. Rather, they will bury themselves in obscurity, in a multitude of ambiguous words, not at all to the purpose. Witness Mr. Cudworth's Further Defence and Mr. Wilson's Review.

2. The thing believed to be true, is on their own scheme not true; for they all hold that we are not pardoned until after faith, at least in order of nature. To be sure, Mr. Wilson expresses this strongly. He says, (p. 209,) that "justification is a consequent of our union with Christ by faith." And to the same purpose, pp. 194, 195, 205. Now, if it be a consequent of our union with Christ by faith, then it does not exist till after faith. Faith is, in order of nature, before justification. But their faith consists in believing they are justified. And so it consists in the believing of a lie; unless they will contradict themselves, and say that justification is not a consequent of our union with Christ by faith, or else affirm that to believe a thing is when it is not, is not to believe a lie. Besides, the proposition believed to be true in their faith, is what they themselves must own to be a lie, on another account. For in their faith, the proposition believed to be true is — that an unbeliever is justified. For their faith does not consist in believing this proposition, namely, — I, who am a believer, am justified. For this is true before it is believed, and whether it is believed or not. But their faith consists in believing this proposition, namely, — I, who am an unbeliever, am justified, — which, as they say, is not true before it is believed, and for the truth of which we have no evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason. For they all maintain, that in the first act of justifying faith,

prior to any reflection on my own act, I believe my sins are all forgiven, (pp. 102, 123,) "without knowing any thing further about my state, than that I am by nature a child of wrath, and an heir of hell, under the curse of an angry and sin-revenging God." (p. 175.) But if I believe that I, who, to my own apprehension, am an unbeliever, am justified, then I believe that an unbeliever is justified; which they own not to be true. Indeed, they hold that, in my believing it to be true, it becomes true. And so, though it was an untruth, yet now it becomes true. And so they keep themselves from seeing that which they believe continues to be a lie. However, it was a lie when first believed, according to their own scheme; for it becomes true only in consequence of their believing it to be true. And if God has never said, as in fact he has not, that, if we believe our sins are forgiven, they shall be forgiven; what they believe is not only a lie, when they believe it, but also continues to be a lie, notwithstanding their faith; and will be found to be so at the day of judgment, according to the express declaration of our blessed Savior. (Matt. vii. 21—27.)

But again, what they believe may be proved to be a lie by another argument. Thus, according to Scripture, no impenitent sinner, while such, ever was, or ever will be, forgiven. But they believe themselves forgiven while impenitent; therefore what they believe is a lie. That no impenitent sinner, while such, ever was, or ever will be, forgiven, is plain from Lev. xxvi., throughout; 1 Kings viii., throughout; Prov. xxviii. 13; Isai. lv. 7; Luke xiii. 5; Acts ii. 38, and iii. 19, etc., as I have proved at large in another place.* Nor can these men deny it, without expressly contradicting the Westminster confession of faith, which asserts (chap. xv.) that no sinner may expect pardon without repentance. And if they give up that confession of faith as heterodox, what will become of their bold pretences, and confident affirmation, that "all the Protestant world are on their side, except Arminians, Baxterians, and ranting sectaries"? But they believe themselves forgiven while impenitent, as is certain from this, that they all hold that a belief they are forgiven is the very thing which causes them to begin to repent; therefore their faith consists in believing a lie.

3. But, granting the fact believed to be indeed true, yet, as it is acknowledged to be no truth revealed in the gospel, their faith is not an evangelical faith, nor are those religious affections which flow from it evangelical graces. For, as the fact believed is not revealed in the gospel, so it is no part of gospel truth; and so

* Essay on the Nature of the Gospel, sect. viii.

their faith is not gospel faith, nor their holiness gospel holiness. For all evangelical and holy affections are excited in the mind by gospel truths. (Psalm xix. 7. John xvii. 17. Jam. i. 18.) They may be called Antinomians; and they greatly resemble the ancient Manicheans; as I have shown in the forementioned essay; but they cannot with propriety be called Christians; for that which is the foundation of their scheme is no part of Christianity, is not once taught in Christ's gospel; as they themselves acknowledge. For the whole gospel, they own, is true before we believe it, and whether we believe it or not. But the first and fundamental article of their creed, and that from which all their religious affections flow, is not true before they believe it to be true; and so it is no part of the gospel.

4. In order to prove Mr. Sandeman's faith not to be justifying faith, Mr. Wilson uses this argument: "Every one who is possessed of justifying faith, must undoubtedly be justified; but a general belief of the gospel, or a general assent to the truth of the facts recorded in the New Testament, is to be found with many who were never justified: therefore a general faith, or assent to the truths of the gospel, and history of the facts recorded in the New Testament, is not justifying faith." (p. 72.) This argument he asserts to be conclusive. But it is equally strong against himself; for every one who is possessed of justifying faith, must be undoubtedly justified; but a belief of the remission of sins, with application to a man's self, which is his own definition of justifying faith, is to be found with many who were never justified; as he himself owns. Therefore this belief is not justifying faith.

Should he say, that self-deceived sinners do not believe their sins to be forgiven, upon the testimony of God in his word; the same is true on his scheme, by his own acknowledgment, for it was not true before he believed it. But the testimony of God is true before we believe it, and whether we ever believe it or not; as he himself owns. Therefore his faith is not built on the divine testimony; but rather, as Mr. Marshall says, "is without any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason."

Or should he say, that the faith of deluded sinners is not productive of evangelical graces, the same may be said of his faith; for no religious affections can be called evangelical graces, which do not result from the knowledge and belief of some truth revealed in the gospel. But the supposed truth which is the source of all their religious affections, is not contained in the gospel, as they themselves own.

Or should he say, that deceived sinners are prompted to believe their sins forgiven, from a self-righteous spirit; just this

is the case on the scheme of these men, as I have proved at large.* There is no possible way then for him to get rid of the force of his own argument. It is equally conclusive against his scheme and Mr. Sandeman's; and does indeed confute them both at once.

Thus we see, that the faith of these gentlemen, in which they profess to believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it, implies a contradiction in its own nature; — is the belief of a lie; — is no gospel faith; — is nothing more than deluded sinners may have. It is therefore very far from being that precious faith which is peculiar to God's elect, and which is infallibly connected with eternal life. Nothing therefore now remains, but to attend carefully to Mr. Wilson's arguments in its vindication, which may be summed up in these four.

Mr. Wilson's Arguments to prove that, in justifying Faith, we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it.

Argument 1. From the offers and promises of the gospel. — His notion is, that the declaration of the gospel amounts to this — O impenitent, unconverted, Christless sinner, believe and thou shalt be saved; that is, believe thy sins are forgiven, and they shall be forgiven. Believe thou shalt be saved, and it shall be to thee according to thy faith. It is not true before we believe; but in believing it to be true, it becomes true. According to thy faith so shall it be to thee. (p. 14.) But this declaration is not made in the gospel; but is a lie; and he that believes it, believes a lie; as has been already proved.

Mr. Wilson has labored the point, in vindication of Mr. Marshall's words, (pp. 28, 29, 30, 31;) and this is the sum and substance of his plea: "An offered gift is not mine before I receive it." "But the offer gives me a right to receive it." "To believe it mine is to receive it." Therefore, in justifying faith, we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it — a mere fallacy. To believe a thing mine, is different from, and a consequence of, receiving it. For instance, a man offers me a guinea; the guinea suits my heart; I receive it, I know I receive it, and so I know and believe it is mine. But here is nothing like believing a thing to be true which is not true before I believe it.

The Pharisees firmly believed that the God of Abraham was their God, and Father, and Friend, and would make them happy forever. This none can deny. But did they receive the God

* Essay, sec. ix.

of Abraham for their God and portion, as he was offered to them in the Old Testament? No, far from it. They hated and rejected him with all their hearts, and murdered his very image, his only-begotten Son. Just so a deluded sinner may be ravished in a belief that Christ, pardon, and heaven, are his own; and yet in the mean time may hate and reject, with the utmost abhorrence, that Christ, that pardon, and that heaven, which are offered in the gospel; as I have shown at large in the forementioned Essay.

"We agree that the gospel proposes nothing to be believed by us," says Mr. Wilson, "but what is infallibly true, whether we believe it or not. But if any one should from hence infer, that the gospel does not afford sufficient warrant, or lay a foundation for believing any thing but what is infallibly true whether we believe it or not; this we beg leave to deny. For as God in the gospel freely promises, or makes an offer of life and salvation to sinners through Jesus Christ, it is evident, the promise cannot be believed but in the way of appropriating the gift, or believing they shall be saved through his blood; which certainly cannot be said to be a truth, whether we believe it or not; for if it was, all who hear the gospel would infallibly be saved.

"The matter is plainly this: the gospel nowhere proposes it as a truth to be believed, that men shall be saved through Christ, whether they believe or not; but it every where testifies, that he that believeth shall be saved. Now, this very declaration, published, and frequently repeated in the gospel for the encouragement of sinners, makes it warrantable for every one of them to believe his own particular salvation through Christ. And the truth is, till he believes this upon the footing of the divine promise, faithfulness, or veracity, he in effect, really, and in the sense of Scripture, disbelieves and calls in question the truth of the divine testimony made known in the proposition aforementioned. That he does so, evidently appears by his not crediting it, so as to rest his hope of salvation wholly upon the promise of God, and the record which he has given of his Son, in the gospel." (pp. 14, 15.)

Stop now, candid reader, and critically examine these words: "He disbelieves the divine testimony," says he. But why? Because "he does not rest his hope of salvation wholly upon the promise of God." But, pray, what promise? Why, this: "He that believeth shall be saved;" which is so "frequently repeated in the gospel." He that believeth! That believeth what? Pray, what is the sinner to believe? He is to believe "his own particular salvation;" to "believe that he shall be

saved." But is this the meaning of the text? Indeed, no. That proposition is not once used in this sense in the Bible. The gospel nowhere declares, that he that believeth he shall be saved, shall be saved: but very many times expressly to the contrary. The thing believed is a lie. But to believe a lie, is not to believe in Christ; unless they make this lie that very Christ on which they venture their all for eternity. Read the Bible through, O impenitent, unconverted, Christless sinner, and you may find enough such declarations as these: "Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins; — repent and be converted, that thy sins may be blotted out; — except ye repent ye shall perish; — repent, and believe the gospel; — believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And these declarations are all true before you believe them, and whether you believe them or not. But you can nowhere find any thing like this — Believe thy sins are forgiven, and they shall be forgiven; — believe thou shalt be saved, and thou shalt be saved. — In this case, what you believe is not true before you believe it, as they themselves grant. And believing a lie, though it may make it seem true to you, yet it will not make it in fact true.

Pray, who is he that believes the divine testimony; he that believes the very thing God means to say; or he that puts a new meaning to God's words, which God never intended, and which never came into his heart? May we not say of these men, as our Savior did of the Pharisees, — By your traditions you make the command of God of none effect? — so by their faith they make the declarations of the gospel a lie. The gospel declares, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish; — repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." But these men teach, that if an impenitent, unconverted sinner, while such, believes his sins are blotted out, they are blotted out; that is, if he believes a thing to be true which is directly contrary to the declaration of the gospel, it shall become true. And so his faith shall cause the declaration of the gospel to become a lie.

Besides, O Christless sinner, what warrant have you to believe that your sins are forgiven? Is it already true? No. But does "the gospel propose any thing to be believed by us, but what is infallibly true, whether we believe it or not?" Mr. Wilson himself is obliged to say, No; but then says, "The gospel warrants you to believe what it does not propose to you to be believed." But is not this an express contradiction? No, says Mr. Wilson. For "the promise of the gospel cannot be believed, but in believing that they shall be saved through his

blood." As if he had said, The promise cannot be believed, but in believing what the promise does not say; for the promise does not say that you in particular shall be saved; or that you shall be saved, if you believe you shall be saved. So that here is another self-contradiction; namely, a promise cannot be believed, but in believing what is not contained in the promise.

But, says Mr. Wilson, "If a man offers me a gift freely, I have certainly a warrant to receive it, and in receiving it, to believe it mine." That is, conscious to myself that I do receive it, I have good evidence to believe it is mine; and in this case, it is mine, in order of nature, before I believe it mine, and so what I believe, is true before I believe it. And so this similitude is nothing to the purpose, nor does it at all help to reconcile to common sense their "strange kind of assurance, which is far different from other ordinary kinds." For they believe Christ is theirs without any consciousness that they receive him, (pp. 123;) and constantly affirm, that that assurance of an interest in Christ, which results merely from a consciousness of any inherent grace, is altogether Popish.

But no man can believe the gospel, who does not believe his sins are pardoned, in Mr. Wilson's judgment, (pp. 14, 133, etc;) and yet he knows, and he owns, that this fact is not revealed in the gospel. Yea, he says, "It is not proposed in the gospel to be believed by us;" and yet no man, he says, can believe the gospel, who does not believe it — an express contradiction again. Mr. Wilson grants a man may have saving faith, and yet not know that it is saving. (p. 123, marg.) But he would have a sinner believe his sins are pardoned, previous to one single thought that he has saving faith. (p. 123.) But in this case it must be "without any evidence of the thing." However, he disbelieves the gospel if he does not believe it, although there is no such thing in the gospel, — "a strange kind of assurance!"

But, says Mr. Wilson, "The stung Israelites, in looking to the brazen serpent, had every one of them good reason to believe, and fully assure himself, that he in particular should be healed." And why? Plainly because every Israelite, while conscious to himself that he is looking, must be certain of a cure; and just thus any sinner who is conscious to himself that he looks to Christ, as he is invited to do, may be as certain of a cure. But in Mr. Wilson's "strange kind of assurance," we must be certain of a cure without any such consciousness. (p. 123.) It is Popish, he constantly cries, to get assurance from his consciousness. But had a stung Israelite looked to the brazen serpent, without being at the same time conscious to himself that he did look, he could not have been assured of a cure, notwithstanding

his belief of the divine declaration, that whosoever looks shall be healed.

But Mr. Wilson will again say, "Had not the Israelites a good warrant to take and eat the manna which lay around their tents? and has not every sinner as good a right to take Christ, the bread of life, and eat and live forever?" (p. 31.) Had the Israelites loathed the manna so perfectly, as absolutely to refuse to gather and eat it, and in their hunger, set themselves to work up a belief that their bellies were full, without any consciousness of the thing, it might have been to Mr. Wilson's purpose. But what was there, in all their conduct, at all resembling Mr. Wilson's faith? They gathered the manna, they made cakes of it, they ate, they were refreshed, and they were conscious to themselves of all that passed. Here was no assurance worked up "without any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason;" here was no believing any thing to be true, but what was true before it was believed; here was nothing but what was perfectly rational; in short, here was nothing like these men's notion of faith, not the least shadow of a resemblance. Nor, indeed, is there in all nature any thing to resemble their faith, unless among those who are delirious, who very often believe strongly things to be true which would have no truth in them if they did not believe them. But then even the most delirious man alive never attempted to act so distractedly as to try to believe that to be true which he knew as yet was not true. This is peculiar to these men, and there is nothing like it in the universe; for, as honest Mr. Marshall says, "this is a strange kind of assurance, far different from other ordinary kinds." To hunt about therefore for similitudes to represent it, is quite out of character. But the men are shocked to see their scheme stark naked; and therefore these similitudes, like fig-leaves, are gathered to hide its nakedness; but all in vain.

Thus we have a specimen of Mr. Wilson's manner of reasoning, to vindicate our believing that to be true which is not true, from the declarations, offers, and promises of the gospel. He repeats much the same things perhaps two hundred times over in his two volumes; and when all is said and done, it comes to this: "God has, in fact, nowhere in his word declared that my sins are forgiven; however, I must believe they are forgiven, or I do not believe the word of God. It is not true before I believe it, but absolutely false; yet I have a good warrant to believe it is true, although I have no evidence of the thing from Scripture, sense, or reason. In receiving a gift, I know it is mine; but if this knowledge arises from a

consciousness that I receive it, I am a Papist." — So absurd, so self-contradictory is his whole course of reasoning; and yet he pretends to have all the Bible and all the Protestant world on his side. And no man can be saved, who is destitute of this unscriptural, irrational, inconsistent, self-contradictory thing, which he calls by the sacred name of faith in Christ. But let us proceed to another argument, which, like the former, is repeated over and over again, and scattered along through his whole performance.

Argument 2. From the nature of reliance on Christ's righteousness. — Perhaps this argument is stated and urged nowhere to so good advantage as in pp. 15, 16, 17. "It will not be denied, that the gospel declares Christ to be an all-sufficient Savior, and bears testimony to his righteousness as every way sufficient for the justification of the most guilty sinner. If one approaching to a frozen lake or river, over which he has occasion to pass, tells me that he has been assured by good information, that the ice was sufficiently strong to support him, and yet, after all, proves timorous and averse to make trial by venturing his person freely upon it; I plainly perceive he has no faith in the report he heard; because he does not trust in it; or, which is the same thing, he cannot trust, rely, confide in, or venture himself on the ice. None can be said to believe the report of the gospel concerning the righteousness of Christ, but those who, without being conscious of any personal merit or good qualification about themselves, rely firmly and wholly upon that righteousness for justification and salvation. And it is equally certain, that such a firm reliance, or fiducial recumbency upon the righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel, must, in the very nature of the thing, imply the faith of one's own justification and salvation through this righteousness. For a man to venture himself, and all his most valuable interests, upon a bottom that he doubts is weak and insufficient to support him, would be the greatest folly imaginable; yet this he must do, who pretends to rely wholly upon Christ and his righteousness for justification and salvation, and yet hath not the faith of his own salvation. If a man has been assured by good information, that the ice of any frozen lake or river he has occasion to pass over, is sufficiently strong to support him, and yet is timorous, and doubts whether he will be safe if he should venture upon it, it is plain he does not confide in, or give credit to the report he heard; for if he did, he would be as much assured of his own safety, as of the truth of the report, or the veracity of him that made it. The application is easy. Upon the whole, it is evident, that till a man believes, and is

in some measure assured of his own justification and salvation through the righteousness and blood of Christ, he never truly believes the report of the gospel, or the divine testimony concerning the same. Let the reader then judge whether there is any truth or sense in asserting, that the hearers of the gospel have no warrant to believe any thing but what is infallibly true whether they believe it or not." To which I answer, —

1. It is written, "He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him." I hear the report, I understand it, I believe it with all my heart; and in the belief of it, I come to God by Christ for salvation. I am conscious to myself I do so, — and so I believe I shall be saved. But what I believe is true before I believe it, and whether I believe it or not; for he who comes to God by Christ, shall be saved, whatever doubts he may have of his good estate. And here is nothing believed but upon good evidence; and nothing like their "strange kind of assurance," which is worked up "without any evidence of the thing," as Mr. Marshall honestly states the case. For, —

2. On their scheme, they believe they shall be saved without any consciousness of their coming to God by Christ, as Mr. Wilson declares over and over again. They believe their sins are forgiven, without any consciousness of repentance, conversion, or faith in the blood of Christ. They believe they shall have a safe passage over the lake, without any consciousness of venturing or walking on it. And so they believe something to be true which in fact is not true, and which at the day of judgment will be found to be a lie.

Come, candid reader, come go with me, to the side of a frozen lake; view the ice with your own eyes, and behold and see it is full ten feet thick. And will not this bear the weight of a single man; yea, will it not bear the weight of a thousand men? You therefore cannot doubt of the safety of venturing upon it, "without rebelling against the light of your reason, senses, and conscience;" and if you venture upon it, it is equally evident you will be safe. "You are constrained to believe it by the clearest evidence." It is true before you believe it. You are certain it is true from "the clearest evidence." You are then at the farthest distance from any thing like their faith, nor have you the least occasion to work up yourself to believe any thing "which is not true before you believe it, without any evidence of the thing." So come, O enlightened sinner, whose eyes are opened to see the whole gospel plan in its glory; come, view this way of salvation with your own eyes. See God the Father, the infinitely glorious Majesty of heaven and earth, to magnify his law, which this revolted world all join to

hate, and to condemn sin, which this apostate world all join to justify; even see him set forth his own Son, of equal glory with himself, to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, that, consistently with the honor of his government, he may pardon the penitent sinner that comes to him in the name of Christ, and looks only to free grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus. View the infinite dignity of the Mediator; view his mediatorial character, office, and work; see how he has, in his life and death, magnified the law and made it honorable; see the eternal Father, how infinitely well pleased he is in what his Son has done. He raises him from the dead; sets him at his own right hand; repentance and remission of sins are proclaimed to a guilty world in his name; and the cry is, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Can there be a doubt now whether it is safe to venture your all upon this Mediator, and return to God in his name, infinitely hateful, odious, and ill-deserving as you are? Impossible. So sure as Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah; so sure as he died on the cross, and now reigns at his Father's right hand; even so sure and certain it is, that it is safe for a sinner, for the greatest sinner, for any sinner, to repent and come to God in his name. "Are you not constrained to believe this by the clearest evidence?" And is it not equally certain, that if you repent, and come to God in the name of Christ, venturing your all for eternity wholly and entirely upon his atonement, righteousness, and merits, and the infinitely free grace of God through him, as revealed in the gospel, that you shall be safe, eternally safe? And therefore, in exact proportion as you are conscious of these things, you may be certain of your own safety in particular. Nor have you any need, or any manner of occasion, to believe any thing to be true which is not true; or to believe without evidence. Nay, you are set at the greatest distance from this kind of blind faith. But, on the other hand, what course for comfort can an impenitent, unconverted, Christless sinner, while such, blind to the glory of God, to the beauty of his law, and to the glory and all-sufficiency of Christ, take? If he will believe his sins are forgiven, when in fact they are not forgiven, and he knows in his conscience they are not, he must "believe without any evidence of the thing." And to call this faith in Christ, to call this trusting wholly in the righteouness of Christ, is to put darkness for light, and to substitute, in the room of Christ, a lie, and nothing but a lie, as the sole object of their faith.

Argument 3. From the nature of that faith which was required of the Israelites; and for the want of which they could not enter into the land of Canaan. — "When God gave the

children of Israel a promise of entering into the land of Canaan," says Mr. Wilson, "I presume it will not be denied, that they had not only a warrant, but that it was their indispensable duty to believe that he would bring them to the possession of it, notwithstanding the difficulties they might have to encounter by the way; yet it cannot be said it was infallibly true that they should enter into the promised land whether they believed or not; for the event proved the contrary. It is evident, then, that they were called to believe something that was not infallibly true, whether they believed it or not." — "This is equally true of the promise of the gospel made to sinners, of mankind indefinitely." For "God hath given to all who hear the gospel a promise of entering into his rest of heaven; which gives every one of them sufficient warrant to believe that he shall be saved." — "This promise is the first and immediate foundation of faith. It is only by an appropriating and fiducial persuasion thereof, that any one can commence a true believer of the gospel, or attain to any certain knowledge of his eternal election." — However, the thing to be believed is not true before they believe it, and never will be true unless they do believe it; and therefore he concludes, that in justifying faith we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it. To this I answer, —

1. The promise which God made to Abraham, and confirmed by an oath, in Gen. xxii. 16, referred to Num. xiv. 30, — for God never did confirm by an oath his promise to that congregation who came out of Egypt; there is no such thing on Scripture record; therefore Num. xiv. 30 has reference to Gen. xxii. 16; — I say, the promise which God made to Abraham, and confirmed by an oath, in Gen. xxii. 16, to give the land of Canaan to his seed, was unconditional and absolute. And by it God obliged himself to give Abraham a seed, and in due time, in spite of all obstacles, whether from their own temper or the opposition of others, to bring them to, and put them in possession of, the land of Canaan. And had God by any means eventually failed of doing this thing, he would have been chargeable with the breach of that promise which he made to Abraham.

Now, this absolute promise to Abraham was a shadow of that absolute promise which God the Father made to his Son, on his undertaking to offer up himself a sacrifice for the sins of men; that he should "see his seed and prolong his days;" that he should "see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;" by which promise the Father absolutely obliged himself, that all Christ's seed should finally be brought to the heavenly Canaan, notwithstanding all opposition from their own hearts,

and from every other quarter. And if by any means any one of Christ's seed should finally perish, God would be chargeable with a breach of that promise made to his Son.

But, as St. Paul reasons, "All are not Israel which are of Israel;" so not all the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, had an interest in the absolute promise of the earthly Canaan, in the sense in which God originally intended it, and in the sense in which he afterwards explained it; for Ishmael, who was a child of Abraham, was first cast off; and afterwards Esau was rejected; and afterwards six hundred thousand were cast off at once; and all in perfect consistence with the divine promise to Abraham. Nor was there, as Mr. Wilson insinuates, the least show or appearance of any breach of promise. This was merely the impious and blasphemous construction the wicked Israelites put upon the divine conduct; for by an appropriating act of faith, exactly of the same nature with that Mr. Wilson pleads for, they had been fully persuaded, that they in particular should come to the land of Canaan; and therefore, on their disappointment, were ready to charge God with a breach of promise. (Num. xiv. 3.) To which God, in great wrath, says,—"And ye shall know my breach of promise." As if he had said, "This is what you impiously charge me with; but, unmoved to alter my determination by your impious charge, in the wilderness you shall die: and if you call this a breach of promise, you shall know I will break it thus; for assuredly your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness." And this is a lively type of the final doom which will be passed, at the great day, on all impenitent sinners, who, by an appropriating act of faith, have taken all the promises to themselves, while in fact not one of them ever belonged to them in the sense in which they imagined. So they shall know God's breach of promise, just as the wicked Israelites did.

2. The absolute promise of the land of Canaan, made to Abraham, had no respect to any who were not of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. And therefore, unless a man could produce his genealogy, and prove himself a descendant of Abraham, he could, by that promise, claim no right or share in the land of Canaan; for without this, all the good qualifications in the world would be no weight to give a man a right to an inheritance in that land.

So the absolute promise of the heavenly Canaan, made to Christ, has no respect to any but those who are Christ's seed; those who are in Christ. And therefore, unless a professed Christian can produce good proof that he is in Christ, he can claim no title to heaven by virtue of that absolute promise.

Our own righteousness, in this case, can give no title at all. "But if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

When, therefore, any man who is unconscious that he is united to Christ by faith, is bold to put in a claim to the heavenly Canaan, he is guilty of the grossest presumption, and has no evidence to support his claim "from Scripture, sense, or reason."

3. God's promise in Exod. iii. 17, made to that congregation which died in the wilderness, of bringing them to the land of Canaan, was not an absolute, but a conditional promise, as is plain, beyond all dispute, from Num. xxxii. 6—15, which the reader is desired to turn to. And indeed the conditions, although not expressed in that promise, (Exod. iii. 17,) were plainly implied in the very nature of the thing. For if they should, from an attachment to the pleasures and manners of Egypt, and from a mean and low opinion of the land of Canaan, or from a distrust of the divine power and fidelity to conduct them safely thither, decline, and finally refuse to march for Canaan; or if, after they set out on their journey, repent they ever entered on the expedition, and desire to go back again; neither they, nor any mortal else, would have had any reason to imagine, that God was obliged, by that promise he made to them in Exod. iii. 17, to bring them there. God's promise, then, to bring that congregation to Canaan, left him at full liberty to kill them by hundreds and thousands, if they rebelled against the Lord, instead of cordially falling in with his proposal; yea, to doom all their carcasses to fall in the wilderness.

It is absolutely certain, by the divine conduct, that God viewed it in this light; and therefore, they had no warrant, not one single soul of them, to believe absolutely, when they left Egypt, that they should come to Canaan. It is certain Moses understood the matter thus, from Num. xxxii. 6—15; nor had they any warrant to believe any further than this, namely, that if they would cordially fall in with the divine proposal, and from their inmost soul bid an everlasting farewell to all the manners and pleasures of Egypt, set their whole hearts on the holy land, enlist under the banner of the God of Abraham, cleave to him with all their hearts, march after him, trust his wisdom, sufficiency, and fidelity, to conduct them thither, his power to overcome all obstacles, and so courageously march after him into the holy land, and fight under him against the seven nations of Canaan, and persevere till they had obtained a complete victory; then, and in this way, and in no other, might they expect to come to the possession of that good

land. He, therefore, who found within himself a heart prepared and disposed to all this, might reasonably expect to arrive to a possession of that good land, unless, for special and wise reasons, God should think fit, instead of the earthly, to give him an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan. And therefore, if the wicked Israelites, when they came out of Egypt, far, very far, from such a temper and disposition, did confidently believe they should come to the promised land, they had, in fact, no warrant for their belief. Nor did God hold himself obliged to order things so that it should be unto them according to their faith; but thought himself at full liberty to lead them into such trying circumstances, as should effectually discover their unbelief, enmity against God, attachment to Egypt, low thoughts of Canaan; all which were consistent with that appropriating belief they had when they left Egypt, that they should get to Canaan. And when their hearts were thus discovered, God held himself at liberty, notwithstanding any promise he had made to them, to doom them all to death.

And just so it is in the present case. The gospel promises eternal life, absolutely and unconditionally, to no child of Adam; nor has any child of Adam any warrant to believe, absolutely and unconditionally, that he shall be saved. But the gospel brings the news of the glories of the heavenly Canaan, where God, the supreme good, is to be forever enjoyed, and represents to our view an Almighty Savior and Conductor; invites us to sell all for the pearl of great price; from our inmost soul bid an eternal farewell to the pleasures and manners of Egypt; lay up all our treasures and hopes in heaven, deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Christ to the end of our lives, placing our whole dependence on the merits of his blood, and the influences of his spirit; and promises that all such shall finally arrive safe to the heavenly Canaan; but denounces damnation against all the rest. He, then, who is conscious that he has such a heart in him, may expect to see that good land. But if any, unconscious of this, firmly believe they shall assuredly inherit eternal life, their faith is absolutely "without any evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason;" just as Mr. Marshall says; and they may depend upon it, that God does not hold himself obliged, that "according to their faith so shall it be to them." For if men will believe things which God never promised, he is not obliged to answer their presumptuous expectations, how much soever they may pervert his word to make themselves believe that he is. If they will affirm, that although it is not true before they believe it, yet if they believe it is true, it will become true; still God never said so. God never

enjoined this kind of faith, nor will he ever answer the expectations it begets.

The Israelites could not enter in because of unbelief. Spiritual blindness is the source of unbelief. (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) They were blind to the being and perfections of God. They did not see that the God of Abraham was an absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable being; the supreme, all-sufficient good, infinitely worthy of supreme love, and the most entire confidence, trust, and dependence. Rather they entertained a low idea of God; and hence, when things looked dark, and they come to a pinch, it appeared that they did not think in their hearts that he was a being fit to be believed and trusted; and so they did not think in their hearts, that if they should venture to take his word and march after him to Canaan, that it would end well. Their walls were built up to heaven, and the sons of Anak were there. And therefore they were heartily sorry they had ever left Egypt, and wished themselves back again; they magnified the glory of the land of Egypt, and spake contemptibly of the land of Canaan; they blasphemed God, and were on the point of stoning Caleb and Joshua. Thus they "could not enter in because of unbelief;" that is, of their unbelief of those things which were true whether they believed them or not. For God was an absolutely perfect being, fit to be believed and trusted; and if they had believed him to be such, and in that belief ventured to trust him, and march after him to Canaan, it would have ended well. These things were true, whether they believed them or no; and there was sufficient evidence of their truth; and it was this that rendered their unbelief so criminal. Whereas, had these things not been true, but false — had they known they were false, — they could not have been at all to blame for their unbelief. And God never did, and never will, blame his creatures for unbelief, when he knows, and they know, that there is no evidence from Scripture, sense, or reason, that the things to be believed are true.

Argument 4. From those words, in Mark xi. 23, 24, "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." From these words it is plain," says Mr. Wilson, "that men may have sufficient warrant to believe some things which cannot be said to be infallibly true, whether they believe them or not." To which I answer, —

1. That the faith here spoken of is the faith of miracles. And it was true before they believed it, that if they were at any time inspired by immediate revelation to declare that such a particular miracle should be wrought, it should be done. When, therefore, the immediate suggestion of the Divine Spirit came into their minds, prompting them to declare that a particular miraculous event should happen, they had from that; and from the promise of Christ, full evidence to believe that it would be done on their declaration. And on this ground Peter had a good warrant to say to the lame man, in Acts iii., "Rise up and walk;" and full evidence, before he spake, to believe that on his speaking the man would be healed. And so again here was nothing like their "strange kind of assurance, without any evidence of the thing."

2. But if any are disposed to understand the promise in the 24th verse, in a larger latitude, to respect all the prayers of true saints, — "Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," — yet even then the words will not prove that we ought to believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it. For it is true before we believe it, that whatsoever we ask the Father, in Christ's name, agreeable to God's will, shall be given to us. (Matt. vii. 7, 8—11. John xvi. 23, 24.) When, therefore, any one desires, and is conscious to himself, that he has a heart to ask the offered blessings of the gospel, in the name of Christ, he cannot but know, if he believes the gospel to be true, that he shall have them. For he is "constrained to believe it by the clearest evidence." For he has the express promise of Christ in the case. As if I should say to my child, "Whenever you want bread, ask me for it, and you shall have it. I will never fail in any one instance to give it to you. You may therefore come in the full assurance of faith, nothing doubting but that you shall receive it. For this I establish as an invariable rule by which I will conduct towards you; namely, 'Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find.' When, therefore, you want bread, and have a heart to ask it in the manner you know I would have you, you may know before you ask that you shall receive. And so you may ask, believing you shall receive, and you shall have it." — And now again, in all this, there is nothing like their "strange kind of assurance;" nothing like believing "without any evidence of the thing;" and believing "that to be true which is not true before we believe it." For it is true, whether we believe it or not, that whatsoever we ask in Christ's name shall be given us, and we have the highest

evidence of the thing. What it is to ask in Christ's name, has been already shown.*

3. In order to make this text serve the purpose of supporting their scheme, it must be understood thus: "O Christless, impenitent, unconverted sinner, who art in an unpardoned state, under the wrath and curse of God, impenitent as thou art, believe thy sins are forgiven, and they shall be forgiven. I do not say, as Peter did, 'Repent and be converted, that thy sins may be blotted out,' but I say, impenitent as thou art, and certain as thou art of thine impenitency, without any evidence of the thing, from Scripture, sense, or reason, believe thy sins are blotted out, and it shall be unto thee according to thy faith. For, although it is not true before thou believest it, in believing it to be true it shall become true. Believe, therefore, thy sins are forgiven, and they shall be forgiven." This is the spirit and soul of that evangelical preaching in fashion with these men. (See pp. 102, 123, 175, etc.) But neither that text in Mark, nor any other in the Bible, gives the least countenance to their scheme.

Thus we have taken a view of the arguments which Mr. Wilson uses to prove, that in justifying faith "we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it." And thus we have finished what was at first proposed. And his scheme, in contrast with that of the gross Antinomians, stands thus: gross Antinomianism, and refined Antinomianism, agree in asserting, that in justifying faith we believe that our sins are forgiven, and that God is reconciled to us.

Gross Antinomians assert: First, That the elect are justified before faith. Second, That their justification is manifested to them by the Spirit of God. Third, In consequence of which, they believe they are justified. Fourth, This belief pacifies their consciences, and is the source of every religious affection.

Refined Antinomians assert: First, That before faith, the elect, as well as others, are under the wrath of God and curse of the law. Second, That yet in faith they believe God loves them, and they are delivered from the curse of the law. Third, And because this is not true before it is believed, therefore they believe it without any evidence of the thing. Fourth, This belief pacifies the conscience, and is the source of every religious affection. Now, if the elect are not justified before faith, the gross Antinomian scheme is fundamentally false. And if, in justifying faith, we are not to believe that to be true which is

* Essay, sec. iv. and v.

not true before we believe it, the refined Antinomian scheme is also fundamentally false.

The fact believed on both schemes is the same, namely, that an impenitent, unconverted, Christless sinner is justified. And a belief of this fact on both schemes produces the same effects, namely, pacifies the conscience, and is the source of all their religion. And both schemes grant that this fact is not revealed in the Bible. But one vindicates his belief by saying, the elect are justified before faith, and have their justification immediately revealed to them by the Spirit of God; and the other by saying, we are commanded by God to believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it, and to believe without any evidence of the thing, and God stands obliged that our faith shall not be disappointed.

We have heard how the celebrated Mr. Marshall explains his scheme; and we have considered what Mr. Wilson has to offer in its defence; and the controversy is brought into a narrow compass, to one single point, namely, whether, in justifying faith, we believe that to be true which is not true before we believe it. And it is brought down out of the clouds, and made plain and easy to the weakest capacity, and every one is freely left to judge for himself.

If after all, any poor bewildered sinner is still at a loss, let him take his Bible in his hand, enter into his closet, fall on his knees, look up to God, who has given him the Bible to be the only rule of his faith, and say, "O Lord, thou hast given me thy holy word to be the only rule of my faith; and is it safe, great God, for me to venture my soul for eternity in the belief of that which all acknowledge is not revealed in thy holy word? If every truth contained in that sacred book, all which are true before they are believed, join to declare me an unpardoned sinner,— O, leave me not to quiet my conscience by the belief of that which is not revealed there. O, suffer me not to fly from the unerring word of my final Judge, and take refuge in a lie. Rather let me have no peace than a false peace. O, lead me out of this bewildered state, and give me a heart to understand and believe thy holy word, and make that the only rule of my faith, of thine infinite mercy through Jesus Christ." Then let him turn to read and well consider the following texts: Matt. vii. 21—27. Acts iii. 19. Luke xiii. 3, 5. Isa. lv. 7. Prov. xxviii. 13. Acts xx. 21. John iii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. Luke iv. 9, 10, 11. 1 John ii. 4.

EARLY PIETY RECOMMENDED.*

REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH.

Ecclesiastes xii. 1.

THERE are many considerations, of very great weight, to awaken our mind to a holy reverence and most sacred attention, when we read or hear the word of God. It is the word of God, the infinitely great and glorious God, the supreme Lord and sovereign Governor of the whole world; whose are all things, and whose we are, and who has a right to command us; the God that angels fear, and to whose voice they always hearken with the deepest reverence, esteeming all his injunctions most sacred. And besides, all that he speaks to us is calculated not only for his own glory, but also for our best good. As the kind Father of our spirits, in his infinite wisdom he marks out that path for us to go in, which is not only right and fit in itself, but also suited to render us most happy. His laws are all holy, just, and good. And that he may reach our hearts the more effectually, he singles out particular cases, and adapts himself to the particular tempers and circumstances of the children of men. He knows just how it is with mankind, how they feel, what their hearts are apt to be set upon, and what their temptations and dangers are, and how to speak a word in season to every soul. So of old he used to deal with the children of Israel. All the nations round about them were idolaters, and worshipped their gods under some visible form, and he knew what temptations his people would be under to do as others did, and conform to the common mode. How often, therefore, and how solemnly, by Moses and by the prophets,

* The author's title is, Early Piety recommended; or, the Obligations to Early Piety, and the Necessity of renouncing Youthful Vanity, represented in a Discourse on Eccles. xii. 1; delivered at Stratfield, October 7, 1747. — "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." — Matt. vii. 13, 14.

does he warn them to beware, lest at any time they should be led away from the Lord their God to other gods, or to worship him under some visible form, as the heathen nations round about did their deities! So here, in our text, he admonishes persons in their youth. He knows the temper and temptations of young people; how apt they are to be unmindful of the God that made them, and to forsake their own mercies to follow after lying vanities, and run into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. He sees them, he pities them; and as the great Governor of the world, and the kind Father of their spirits, he calls after them, reproves and warns them. "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. — Stop, hearken, consider — no longer forget the God that made you; be not unmindful of the hand that formed you, and holds your soul in life, nor delay any longer; but remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." As if he had said, "I see what your temper is; I know what your thoughts are, what your temptations, and what your danger; you are inclined to have no sense of God upon your spirit, to give a loose to your vain imaginations, to indulge wanton affections, and put far away all serious thoughts; flattering yourselves with vain hopes of a better time hereafter. The world looks gay to you, and your companions entice you along; but verily that road leads to eternal ruin. I see you and know the way you take. I pity you, I call to you, I warn you, I command you, — Remember thy Creator; be mindful of God now, without any further delay, — in the days of thy youth." And should not young people hearken when God thus speaks to them, and attend with the utmost solemnity, especially considering that all this is in and through Jesus Christ, the Mediator? For so bad were we, and such were our guilty circumstances, that we cannot in any reason suppose the great and holy Governor of the world would have had any thing to do with us in a way of mercy, but for the interposition of a Mediator. It would have been a reproach to the holy Majesty of heaven and earth, to have ever spoken one kind word to a guilty world, but for the mediatorial undertaking of his own Son. It would have been inconsistent with the honor of his majesty, of his holiness and justice, and sacred authority; because, by our apostasy from God, we were become too bad to be pitied, too bad to have any mercy shown us; so bad, that every thing was too good for us that was better than damnation. Such was our deplorable case. But the Son of God has interposed as Mediator, to secure his Father's honor, and to open a door for mercy. He was made of a woman, made under the law; has obeyed, suffered, and

died, to make atonement for sin by his blood, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. In his obedient life and death, the holiness and justice of God have received perfect satisfaction, and the honor of his law and government is secured; that now the great Governor of the world may show favor to sinners, and yet not so much as seem to be a favorer of sin. Hence he has reprieved this guilty world from ruin, and entered upon methods of grace, to recover sinners to himself. And shall we not now hearken to any kind word he speaks, and attend to every command with all our hearts? O that these thoughts, which have been suggested, might awaken us all, and particularly every youth in the assembly, to attend with the utmost solemnity of mind, while we take the words of our text into serious consideration. They are immediately spoken to you that are in your youth, and that from God, the great Governor and Judge of the world. In this warning he seeks your welfare; and it is the precious blood of Christ which has purchased for you the mercy of this call from God. That I may assist you to dwell a while upon these words in serious thoughts to better advantage, I will observe this method in the following discourse: —

I. I will endeavor to show what is implied in remembering God.

II. What obligations young people are under to this.

III. Offer some directions and motives.

I. I am to show what is implied in remembering God. And, in general, it is a heart-affecting, soul-transforming, vital, efficacious remembrance of God, that is here recommended; and not any mere empty, dry, lifeless notion of God in the head. It is such a remembrance of God, or such a sense of God on the heart, as effectually divorces and weans us from all other things, and influences us to love him with all our hearts, to choose him for our portion, take up our contentment in him as our all, and devote ourselves to him, to walk in all his ways, and keep all his commands, seeking his glory as our end. For when God requires us to know him, to think of him, to acknowledge him, or to remember him, he always means, as our Savior more plainly expresses it, when speaking of love to God, that it should be with our heart, and with our soul, and with our mind, and with our strength. And hence those that do not thus remember God, do in Scripture account forget the Lord, and God is said to be "not in all their thoughts:" yea, the Scriptures carry the point so far, as to express it thus: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God;" because wicked men, in their security, although they are not professed atheists,

yet they practically deny the God that is above, and feel at heart as if there was no God; for they do not worship him in spirit and in truth; they do not come to him in and by Christ; they do not love him, nor fear him, nor trust in him; but they feel, and act, and live, as if in very deed there was no God; and hence they are said to be "without God in the world." Faith without works is dead, saith St. James; and that remembrance of God which is unaffecting and inefficacious, is dead, and good for nothing.

But to be particular, —

1. Remembering God implies, that we know him, that we have right apprehensions of him, that we see him to be just such a one as he is. For we cannot with any propriety be said to remember that God whom we do not know; and if we have wrong apprehensions of God, though we think of him ever so much, yet it is not God that we remember, but only that false image we have framed in our own fancy. A right remembering of God therefore supposes, that he who commands the light to shine out of darkness, shineth into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and that we with open face behold as in a glass — in the glass of his works and of his word, of the law and of the gospel — the glory of the Lord; so as to take in that very representation of God which he himself has made.

2. Remembering of God implies, that we have a vital sense of God in our hearts; a realizing, living sense of his being and perfections; that we see and feel there is a God, and such a one as he really is — a being of infinite understanding, and almighty power, of infinite wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; and so a being of infinite majesty and greatness, of boundless glory and excellency, absolutely worthy to be esteemed, and loved, and feared, trusted in and obeyed, for what he is in himself. Such a sense of God on our hearts is necessarily implied in remembering of God, and seems indeed to be that in which it primarily and principally consists. To forget God, and to be without such a sense of God on our hearts, seems to be much the same thing in Scripture account. Beware, says Moses to the children of Israel, "that thou forget not the Lord thy God, when thou hast eaten, and art full," — encompassed about with all the good things of this world; — "but thou shalt then remember the Lord thy God," etc. As if he had said, "Innumerable methods have been taken with you, in the wilderness, to beget in you a sense of God; beware then that you do not lose this sense of God, when you come into that good land, and have plenty of all things." Then do

persons remember God, when they daily have a living sense of God on their hearts; a living sense of his all-seeing eye and all-governing hand; a living sense of his glorious moral excellency and infinite all-sufficiency. This will make the thoughts of God natural and free, genuine and unforced. He will become the object of our continual devout contemplation. We shall think of him wherever we be; at home or abroad, in company or alone. In the daytime our hearts will be with him, and in the night season. On our beds we shall remember him, and when we awake in the morning we shall still be with him. Having tasted that the Lord is gracious, the Savior of his grace will lie always on our spirits in some degree.

3. Remembering God also implies a sort of forgetting all other things. It includes in its idea a taking our eyes off from ourselves, and losing a sense of our own fancied excellences; a turning away our eyes from beholding vanity, a losing sight of the glory of this world, and losing our relish for carnal and worldly delights; ourselves and all things about us appearing infinitely mean in our eyes, compared with God. It implies a hearty divorce from ourselves, and from all other things, out of a superlative love to God. "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house." A living sense of God on our hearts will naturally beget this spiritual weanedness from all other things. A sense of his greatness and glory will make us, like Job, to abhor ourselves, and comparatively to loath life under its highest temporal advantages, all earthly grandeur appearing mean and worthless to us. A sense of God's infinite beauty and excellency will make all the gay and enchanting things of this world fade away into insignificant and empty toys; and the sweetness there is in the enjoyment of him will forever spoil our relish for worldly lusts and the pleasures of sin. So that a due sense of God will effectually deaden us to all other things. Yea, what things were gain to us, this will make us to account but loss and dung, that we may win Christ, and God in him. This is necessarily implied in remembering God.

Surely those cannot be said to remember God who are always full of themselves, full of a sense of their own goodness, and are dwelling forever upon their own high attainments; ready always to say, "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men." Such may be said to remember their own duties, or their own experiences and good frames; but in the Scripture sense, God is not in all their thoughts. Neither can those be said to remember God, who are full of a sense of the glory of this present world, full of worldly views and worldly schemes, and only seek after worldly and sensual enjoyments. No man

can serve two masters, says our Savior — "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Ye cannot remember God whilst your hearts are full of other things, and entirely wedded to them. If young people should remember God, they must be brought to have just such a temper of mind towards all youthful lusts, and carnal sports and vanities, as old Barzillai had towards the entertainments of David's court; that is, no relish, no heart for them. "I am this day," says he, "fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat, and what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men, or singing women? Wherefore let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in my own city." To love youthful vanities and sensual pleasures, is inconsistent with remembering God. "Whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." Such are they who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Persons of this character cannot possibly be such as remember God. The hearts of young people must therefore be divorced from all their beloved pleasures and carnal merriments; or else there can never be any room for God in their souls. Thus a remembering of God implies that all other things are set light by, and are in a sense out of mind and forgotten. They are in a manner quite done with, the heart being otherwise taken up.

4. Remembering God also implies, that we choose him as our chief good, and are devoted to him, to seek his glory, as our last end; that we bid adieu to all other lords and lovers, and cleave to him only as the satisfying portion of our souls; that we renounce all other masters, and become his servants in the very temper of our hearts, steadfastly bent to do his will, to walk in his ways, and keep all his commands, seeking his glory as our supreme end. When we look upon God as a satisfying portion, and take contentment in him as such; when we look upon God as a being infinitely worthy, and as such are entirely devoted to him, accounting it the chief end of man to glorify God and to enjoy him forever; then do we remember God in deed and in truth; — nor will any thing short of this effectually keep our hearts from departing from God, and growing unmindful of him, "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And a due sense of God on our hearts will effectually influence us to choose him and adhere to him. It did so influence the Psalmist, when he said, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nothing on earth that I desire besides thee. Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." It did so influence the primitive Christians, who could say, "Whether we live, we live to the Lord, or whether

we die, we die to the Lord." It was a maxim with them in those happy days, whether they did eat, or drink, or whatever they did, to do all to the glory of God. And when God comes to be truly remembered by us, to be uppermost in our hearts, it will be our maxim too.

In a word, this remembering God implies in it both the principle and practice of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ — a turning to God from all idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven — a thorough conversion to God, and a good conversation in Christ.

Thus remembrance of God supposes that we know him; that we have right apprehensions of him; that we see him to be just such a one as he is; that we have a living sense of God on our hearts; that we become strangers and pilgrims on earth in the temper of our minds, dead to ourselves, weaned from the world; that we look out towards another and a better country, even a heavenly; and that we cleave to God with all our hearts, and are consecrated to him, to do his will and seek his glory. And a due remembrance of God will make Christ precious to the soul, will afford powerful inducements to "live by the faith of the Son of God," and lay a foundation for all holy living. We shall love to think on his name, to read and hear his word, and to keep it, to live a life of conformity to him, and of communion with him. If young people remembered God as they ought, they would esteem "a day in his courts better than a thousand elsewhere;" and one evening spent in prayer alone would be better to them than a thousand spent in vain company abroad. And such children will love, and honor, and obey their parents, and be kind and endearing in their behavior to all. Happy parents, that have such children; and happy children, that thus remember their Creator in the days of their youth. We are now, —

II. To consider the obligations that young people are under thus to remember God their Creator in the days of their youth.

1. They are under infinite obligations to do so, arising from the consideration of what God is, in himself. — To forget and slight things that are mean and worthless is no evil; but for children to forget and slight their parents, especially if they are knowing and wise, holy and good, argues a very bad temper of mind. But to forget and slight God, the infinitely great and glorious God, the glory of heaven, the joy of angels and saints, — this is infinitely wicked.

God is infinitely glorious and excellent in himself, as being, what he is, antecedent to any consideration of what he has

done, or intends to do, for us. Holy men, such as Moses, David, and Paul, are excellent and amiable in being what they are; in having such a holy temper of mind. Angels and saints in heaven are still more excellent, on the same account; but God is the original infinite fountain of all perfection and excellency; — in a word, he is by nature God. Hence, from being conscious to his own divinity, from seeing himself what he is, he takes state to himself, asserts his exalted character, as he whose name alone is Jehovah, the living and true God, saying, "I am the Lord, and besides me there is no other God." It would be infinite wickedness for an angel to set up himself for God; but this conduct is infinitely right, and fit, and beautiful in him who is by nature God. And on this ground he commands all the world to fear, love, and adore him; and he esteems the wretch who does not do so with all his heart, worthy of everlasting damnation. Infinite goodness itself accounts the eternal torments of hell a punishment but just equal to the crime. How often does he say, in the five books of Moses, O Israel, thou shalt do thus and thus, "for I am the Lord." Nearly twenty times is this repeated in one chapter, (Lev. xix.,) thus and thus shall ye do, "for I am the Lord." This is the first thing mentioned in the ten commandments, — "I am the Lord thy God," etc., — which teaches us, that because he is the Lord, etc., therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments. And as our Savior expresseth it in Matt. xxii. 37, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." His being the Lord, his being by nature God, his being what he is in himself, is the grand and primary foundation of his infinite amiableness; this ought therefore to be the grand and primary foundation of our love to him. And from hence we are under infinite obligations to love him with all our hearts, always to remember him, to live under a sense of his being and perfections, to be divorced from all other things, to choose him as our all, and seek his glory as our last end; and it is infinitely wrong not to do so.

We are under many obligations from self-love to remember God, to love him, and be devoted to him; for he is our Creator, Preserver, and great Benefactor. And besides, to love him with all our hearts, and seek his glory in all we do, is the most delightful thing on earth; it is a pleasure near akin to heaven.

But antecedent to those, and to all other selfish considerations whatsoever, there is an infinite obligation lying upon us to love him with all our hearts, to remember him, to cleave to him, and to seek his glory, resulting from his being what he is in himself, his being by nature God, the original infinite fountain

of all moral good and moral excellency. Whence to forget him is infinitely wrong, and so justly deserves an infinite punishment.

If we were under no obligation but what results from self-love, then the great and the only evil of sin would consist in its being contrary to our own interest and happiness; for there is no evil in sin but what results from our obligations to do otherwise. And if our happiness was all that obliged us to virtue, then there could be no other evil in vice but its natural tendency to make us miserable; that is, there would be no evil in sin, as it is against God, and contrary to the reason and nature of things; but only and merely as it is against us, and contrary to our own interest. And hence sinners could be considered by the great Governor of the world as being to blame in no other respect, or upon no other account, than merely as doing what wrongs themselves, and is contrary to our own interests. So much as they hurt their own interest, so much therefore would they be to blame, and no more; they would be blamable merely for that, and upon no other account. But it is certain that God thinks them infinitely to blame over and above all that, or else he would never inflict an infinite punishment upon them, over and above all the misery which necessarily results from the nature of vice. If there were no evil in sin, but as it is against us, and not as it is against God, there would be no room nor just ground for his everlasting wrath, and for the lake of fire and brimstone, which he has threatened to the wicked; for no crime deserves to be punished, but only in proportion to its blameworthiness. But upon this hypothesis, sin is blameworthy merely because of its natural tendency to make us miserable; and therefore, in this view of the case, sin can deserve no other punishment, but merely that misery which necessarily results from its own nature. No inflicted misery, that is, no proper punishment, is at all deserved.

But God thinks that the least sin deserves everlasting damnation; even the least defect in our love, the least unmindfulness of God. And why? Because, being conscious to his own nature and infinite excellency, he knows that his intelligent creatures are under infinite obligations thence arising, antecedent to any consideration else whatsoever, to love him with all their hearts, to remember him, to have a constant sense of him on their spirits, so as to be divorced from all other things, and be entirely devoted to him.*

* If there is an infinite moral excellency in the divine nature, upon the account of which he is infinitely amiable, and so we under infinite obligations to love him with all our hearts, antecedent to all selfish considerations, then not to love him with all our hearts is an infinite evil, and so deserves an infinite pun-

I have insisted upon this the longer, because many seem to leave this moral excellency of the divine nature out of their idea of God; and consider him only as the author of their happiness, as one disposed to exert his infinite wisdom and almighty power to promote their best good; and only as such do they love him: and so all their love to God is nothing but self-love, in another shape. And consequently, all their

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ishment. And upon this ground the eternity of hell torments may be accounted for. But if there is no such excellency in the divine nature, and if all our obligations to love and obey him result merely from self-love, then I think the above argument conclusive, nor can I see how the eternity of hell torments can possibly be accounted for.

Learned men, who leave this excellency of the divine nature out of their idea of God, seem to have been aware of this difficulty, and they have labored to solve it; but all in vain.

Some consider God as the sovereign Lord of life and death, vested with all power and authority; and they say, things are right merely because he wills to have them so. But I answer, it is impossible that he should will the everlasting damnation of sinners, if they do not deserve it, because that would be to act counter to his own nature. (See Gen. xviii. 25.)

Some consider God as aiming at the general good of the whole system of intelligent creatures, as his last end; and they say, that it is for the general good of the whole, that the wicked should be everlastingly tormented in hell; because such severity will tend to confirm the rest in everlasting obedience. But I answer, if the wicked do not in justice deserve the eternal torments of hell, their being so treated will rather tend to dishonor God in the eyes of all the angels and saints in heaven, and tempt them to cast off their allegiance to him, to flee from his presence, and conceive a hatred of him, just as we naturally detest a merciless and cruel tyrant. And besides, God, who has forbid us to do evil that good may come, most certainly will not do this himself.

Again, some seem to suppose that there will be no proper punishment inflicted upon the damned in hell; that they will have no other torment but what necessarily results from the nature of vice; that they will be a torment to themselves, but shall have no additional punishment. But, I answer, this notion is directly contrary to all the New Testament, which every where sets the case in a very different light. Everlasting punishment, the damnation of hell, a lake of fire and brimstone, the indignation and wrath of God, etc., are constantly threatened to the wicked; and particularly, God is said "to show his wrath and make his power known in their destruction," — all which phrases evidently denote a proper inflicted punishment.

Others have taken another course, and have ventured even to deny the eternity of hell torments. But they may as reasonably, and had as good, deny the Scriptures to be the word of God. For nothing can be more plainly and fully asserted. "Their worm shall not die, their fire shall never be quenched, — the smoke of their torments shall ascend forever and ever," etc., without the least hint, that such phrases are not to be understood in their most natural sense, as denoting the infinite duration of their punishment.

So that the eternity of hell torments cannot be denied; nor can this be accounted for upon the hypothesis, that all our obligations to love and obey God result merely from self-love. And yet if the moral excellency of the divine nature be granted, and our infinite obligations, thence arising, to love him with all our hearts, antecedent to any selfish consideration, then surely the Arminian and Antinomian schemes of religion must both be false, for upon the principles of either of these schemes, all religion results merely from self-love; nor do they seem to have any just notion of the moral excellency of the divine nature, or of our infinite obligations to love and obedience thence arising. If the reader desires to see more upon this subject, let him read Mr. Edwards upon *Religious Affections*, from p. 134 to p. 182.

religion is vain, a mere selfish thing; a religion that God never meant, that the law never required, and that the gospel never taught.

We will suppose there is a man who formerly was greatly awakened, and trembled for fear of divine wrath; but since then, he has had his heart full of love to God and Christ, and now doubts not he is going to heaven. But whence did this man's love to God and Christ first take its rise? Why, he had it discovered to him, as he thought, by the Spirit of God, that his sins were pardoned, or that he was elected, or that Christ died for him, or that God loved him, or that Christ loved him, and he was assured of eternal life. And so he was filled full of love and rapturous joy; just as the graceless Israelites were filled at the side of the Red Sea, when they saw Pharaoh and his army drowned, and themselves delivered. And now this man admires God, and magnifies Christ; but still all is, at bottom, merely from self-love. There is no more true grace in his heart now, than there was before. And when such a one comes to find out, after death, what God is, and how he always looked upon him, and when he hears that sentence, "Depart from me; I never knew you," he will then find his love turn into hatred — will hate God with all his heart, and blaspheme his name forever. Such a one does not love God at all for what he is in himself, or on the account of that in which his infinite amiableness truly consists; but false apprehensions of God are the ground of his love. He only loves a false image of God, formed in his own fancy. But as for Jehovah, the God of Israel, the man neither knows nor cares for him. (See 2 Cor. xi. 14. Matt. xiii. 25, 39.)

And there is another man, we will suppose, who is a great enemy to all spiritual experiences; but who, as he thinks, loves God sincerely, yea, has always loved God, and imagines it is in a measure natural to him to love God. But why does he love God, and what a God is it that he loves? Truly, it is the God that loves him, and loves all mankind, and is heartily engaged to make all his creatures happy, as his ultimate end. And who, says he, can help loving so good and kind a being? And besides, if I go on to love him as well as ever I can, he has assured me of his final favor and eternal life. And thus, he also having framed a god in his own imagination, to suit his humor, he now idolizes the image which he has set up. This man seems to have no just notion of the infinite holiness and justice of the divine nature, and his infinite excellency on that account; but fancies within himself a God all made up of mere goodness and love: and it is natural to him to love such

a kind and benevolent being; self-love prompts him to it. Only false apprehensions of God are the ground of his love. The Holy One of Israel, instead of making the happiness of a worm of the dust his ultimate end, values the honor of his moral perfections above the happiness of all worlds. And when self-deceived sinners come to be in hell, they will know that God does not aim at their happiness as his ultimate end, but that the honor of his own name, which is holy and reverend, is infinitely dearer to him. And then their pretended love to God will die away, and all come to nothing; then they will feel themselves haters of God, and turn everlasting blasphemers of him; while the whole host of heaven will still cleave to him, and love and praise him, for that wherein his most amiable beauty consists, even the infinite excellency of his moral perfections. (See Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8, and xix. 1—6.)

Now, on the account of this original, underived, immense moral dignity and glory of the divine nature, are all mankind under infinite obligations to fear and love God, to remember their Creator, and so to esteem him, as to renounce all other things, and cleave to him only with all their hearts, and be forever entirely devoted to him. On this account, primarily and first of all, antecedently to all other considerations, are young people under infinite obligations to remember now their Creator in the days of their youth.

If God be not considered as being what he is, all other considerations put together would not make it half so wicked a thing to forget the Lord; but under that view of him, it appears a conduct utterly inexcusable, altogether intolerable, infinitely vile. Every moment's unmindfulness of God merits the eternal torments of hell. It is really so; for God would never threaten everlasting damnation for the least sin, if the least sin did not really deserve it; since there can be nothing like tyranny in his government, or cruelty in his nature. It is worse, it is infinitely worse, O young people, to be unmindful of God, than you are wont to imagine. It is so heinous and provoking an evil, that the kindest angel in heaven could not find in his heart to bear with you one hour, were he able to see this sin fully in the same light that God does. It is infinitely wicked; and so too much for any but infinite patience to bear with. Think of it, O young man — think of it, O young woman — and tremble to see what the frame of your heart has been. Be ashamed of all your past forgetfulness of God; and remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

2. If young people seriously consider what they themselves are, their obligation to remember God in their youth will

further appear. Young people are under exceeding great obligations to have a sense of God on their hearts, to sit loose to all other things, to cleave to the Lord, and be entirely devoted to him, arising from the consideration of their being what they be, that is, rational creatures, born to an endless existence, and capable, by divine grace, to know and love God, and be everlastingly blessed in the enjoyment of him. Had they nothing beyond a mortal brutal nature, they might live as the beasts do; never think of God, delight only in animal pleasures, spend their days in wantonness and all carnal sports and pastimes. But in the reason of things, it is entirely unfit for human creatures, that have immortal spirits, to do do. The same minds which are taken up with a thousand foolish vanities, might be employed in contemplating the infinitely glorious God, his works, and his word. The same hearts, which are wedded to the world and the flesh, captivated with the objects of sense, and carried out after mean, sordid, and brutal pleasures, might be full of divine light and life, of love to God, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The hours that are spent in vain company might be spent in communion with God. The same time that is spent in fitting themselves for an eternal hell might be spent in preparing for an eternal heaven. And for rational creatures thus to abuse themselves by serving divers lusts and pleasures, is to degrade their own nature, to despise their own souls, and to affront the God that made them of an order of beings superior to the beasts that perish. They are rational agents by creation, but they practically choose to be beasts. They are capable of being made partakers of the divine nature and of divine pleasures, but they prefer the brutal nature and brutal pleasures. And is not this infinitely absurd and infinitely wicked? Surely, since they have souls, and are rational creatures, they ought to aspire after the knowledge and enjoyment of God; of God, the proper centre of every intelligent being. If they would show themselves men, they ought to remember God their Creator in the days of their youth.

3. Their obligations to remember God will appear still greater, if it be considered what an original, underived, entire right he has to them, as the work of his hands, and the care of his constant providence.

Were they perfectly their own, then, if they did throw away themselves, it would not be so bad; but they are not their own; they are the Lord's; they are his entirely. Him, therefore, they are bound to acknowledge and remember; his must they be in the very temper and bent of their minds; to him must they live, and not to themselves.

God is absolutely the first being, self-existent and independent, the original fountain of all being, the author and preserver of all things that are. He it is that created the heavens and the earth; and all things therein are the work of his hands. He is the great Father of the whole universe; but for him these things would never have been; and but for him they would cease to be. Now, since they do thus exist of his mere good pleasure, and as the effects of his almighty power, surely he has an absolute property in them; he has an original, underived, entire right to all things; his they are: and it is fit, infinitely fit and reasonable, therefore, that all things should be for him, and that he should receive a revenue of glory from all. Hence the heavenly hosts fall down before him, and cast their crowns before his throne, and worship him as the Lord of all, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." And since young people, in common with all other created beings, are thus entirely the Lord's, it is infinitely fit that they should know and feel this to be the case, in the very bottom of their hearts; and from a deep sense of this, be influenced to remember God, and give up themselves to be his — his in a peculiar sense.

Parents have a kind of right to their children; they call them their own, and look upon them in a measure at their disposal, and under their authority. And children ought to feel their parents' interest in them, to own themselves in some sense theirs, and at their disposal, and to be devoted to please and honor them, and do their will. But the parents' right is only a secondary, derived, and partial right; their children are the Lord's originally, and only lent to them; they are the Lord's by an underived, supreme, absolute, and entire right. He made them, his hands formed them, he is the Father of their spirits, and he holds their souls in life. Parents were instrumental to their existence; but God was the proper author of their being. Parents have been instrumental to feed and clothe them; but the food and raiment were the Lord's, and from him they derived all their virtue to nourish and cherish them. And the parents themselves were not their own, but the Lord's, and acted but in subordination to him, and with an entire dependence on his providence and blessing. So that parents have, comparatively, but a small claim to their children, but an inferior interest in them; they are not strictly their parents' property, but are only lent to them for a while: yea, in some sense, parents have no right at all to their children, they are so entirely the Lord's still. They are as much the Lord's as if

they had been immediately created out of nothing, and as if they had always received all their food and raiment immediately out of heaven; in a word, they are his by a sovereign, original, perfect right. And this his entire right to them is renewed every moment, in virtue of his sustaining and preserving them; for "in him they live, move, and have their being." And were it not for his providence, themselves, and this world and all things in it, would instantly dissolve and fall into nothing. Now, since they are entirely the Lord's in fact, they ought also to be entirely his in the temper and disposition of their minds; to look on themselves as his, and accordingly to yield themselves to the Lord, to have no will but his, and no delight but in pleasing him. To forget God, therefore, and not live to him, but to themselves, is infinitely wrong. With a special eye to this consideration, the words of our text seem to have been spoken — "Remember now *thy Creator*, in the days of thy youth."

4. Young people are under infinite obligations to remember now their Creator in the days of their youth, arising from the consideration of the authority of God, the great Governor of the world, who enjoins this upon them as their indispensable duty. Since God is what he is, and since he has made and does preserve all things, it is fit, infinitely fit, that he should sustain the character of supreme Lord and sovereign Governor of the whole world; and it is infinitely fit that all his intelligent creatures should have a most sacred regard to his authority. When, therefore, he enjoins any thing upon angels or men, they are under infinite obligations to the most ready and perfect obedience. But God, the great Governor of the world, does with all his authority command young people to remember now their Creator in the days of their youth.

He is infinitely glorious in himself, and so infinitely worthy of their highest esteem. And it is therefore infinitely fit that all their powers should be exerted in contemplating and loving God, the best of beings, and the proper object of their happiness. And besides, they are the Lord's; they are not their own, they entirely belong to him; and so it is infinitely fit that they should be his; in the temper and bent of their minds entirely devoted to him.

But the great Governor of the world looks down and sees they are naturally disposed to have no regard to the reason of things, to what is right and fit, and suited to make them happy. He sees them, he knows their hearts, he abhors their unholy, unreasonable temper, and pities poor creatures running to ruin. With the authority and compassion of a God, he calls aloud to

the young person in particular, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

And for them to tread under foot the rightful authority of such a God, whom all in heaven reverence and fear, love and obey, and to break such a law, so reasonable in itself, and so well suited to their welfare, is big with rebellion; it argues high contempt of the Majesty of heaven, and the greatest folly and madness.

If one should pretend to command them, who had no right to them, nor authority over them, they might reasonably feel themselves at liberty, his command notwithstanding; but if their parents command them to do what is right and fit, they are no longer at liberty; they are obliged to obey. Much more when God commands them; the infinitely great and glorious God, the great Governor of the whole world, whose they are; their obligations to obedience now are in proportion to the dignity and authority of him who commands; that is, they are infinite. And they are so far from being left at liberty, that they are bound and obliged by all the authority of Heaven to do what is enjoined. And there is no other way now by which they can proceed in a course of disobedience, but to lift up themselves above God, and set up their wills above his, and despise his authority, and bid defiance to his vindictive justice. And surely this is a terrible course for a worm of the dust to venture upon, who is every moment in the hands of God, and liable by his resistless power to be crushed to hell in an instant. Think of this, O young man; think of this, O young woman, and tremble to see what the frame of your heart has been; and hearken to the voice of God, and "remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

5. Young people are under infinite obligations to remember now their Creator in the days of their youth, arising from the consideration of the undertaking, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ, the great Mediator, and of the tenders of pardon and eternal life, that are made to a guilty, undone world through him.

Mankind had apostatized from God, forgotten him, lost a sense of his glory, and plunged themselves into a state of sin and misery, out of which they could by no means recover themselves. They lay in the open field, polluted and perishing in their blood and guilt; without any eye to pity, or arm to save — self-ruined, self-destroyed. And when this was the case, God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He set him forth to be a propitiation through

faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sin, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. And now God is in and through him reconciling the world to himself. All are invited and called upon and commanded to repent and be converted, to change their minds, and turn to the Lord, and give up themselves to God through Jesus Christ. God is reconcilable, and is using means actually to reconcile the world to himself. And this being the case, we are all under new obligations to bethink ourselves, and remember God, whom we have forgotten and forsaken, and return and give up ourselves to him through Jesus Christ. Now, for young people, after all this, to remain unmindful of God, and go on in the ways of vanity and sin, is aggravatedly vile. They despise the kindness and love of God our Savior, and show themselves obstinate in their aversion to him. They cast contempt upon the dying love of Christ, tread under foot his blood, and undervalue and slight all his grace. This is to be in a dreadful degree evil and unthankful.

6. They are under great obligations to early piety, arising from their having been, in their infancy, dedicated to God in baptism.

Baptism is not the instituted means of regeneration, as some pretend; nor do we see any such effect usually following upon it; but baptism signifies our engagement to be the Lord's, and lays us under obligations to be his. Young people, your parents, when they made a profession of religion, gave themselves and all they had, or ever should have, to the Lord; so that you were virtually given to God before you were born. And as soon as you were born, they brought you in their arms, and presented you before God and his people, and by their practice implicitly said, "Whereas heretofore, when we made a profession of religion, we gave ourselves and all we had, or ever should have, to the Lord; and whereas God has now given us this child, we now come and present ourselves and our child before God and his people, that we may dedicate it to God in baptism, according to divine appointment; and we do hereby lay our child under the strongest bonds we can to the Lord, and enter into covenant to bring it up in his fear: we put our child also under the care and watch of the church, that they may stand engaged for its good education. And all this to the intent our child may be preserved from the ways of vanity and sin, and be trained up for God." And hereupon in solemn prayer the case was spread before the Lord, and then you were baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" and so consecrated to the living God.

Remember the solemn season, O parents, when you did thus dedicate your children to the Lord. And know it, the vows of God are upon you, and see to it you be faithful. Their blood will be required at your hands, if they perish through your neglect; and God will treat you as covenant-breakers. Have you told them how you gave them to the Lord; and what obligations they are under to be his? Have you often taken them alone, and with tears, tenderness, and love, labored to impress the great things of God and religion upon their hearts? Have you taught them to pray in secret, to seek God while they are young; and by pious counsels and good examples, been laboring every day to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Remember, this is your duty, and thus did you covenant and promise to do, before God, angels, and men.

And to this church of Christ, suffer me also just to say, all baptized persons are under your watch and care; and you stand bound in the sight of God for their good education. You are Christ's professed friends, and are the Lord's visible family in this place; and therefore all the children are put under your care, that they may be brought up for God. If parents be not faithful, it belongs to you to call them to an account. If children run in riot, it is your business to do all that in you lies to reform them. Christ has betrusted this with you, and expects your fidelity. Let me therefore beseech you, for Christ's sake, for your own sakes, and for the sake of the rising generation, that with one heart, and with one soul, you would exert yourselves to the utmost to encourage and promote good family government, and the pious education of children. If any church neglects their duty in this matter, it will bring much guilt upon them, as covenant-breakers; and the blood of perishing souls will be required at their hands.

But to return. See here, O young people, the goodness of Christ, the great head of the church, in making such provision for your spiritual welfare, as soon as you were born. By his appointment you were brought into his visible family, there to be trained up for eternal glory. See here also the good will of your parents: they gave you to the Lord, and entered into covenant to bring you up in his fear, and laid you under the strongest bonds they could to be the Lord's. And what now is your proper duty; and what ought to be the temper of your minds? "I thank the God of heaven," should every one of you be ready to say, "I thank the great Redeemer, for this merciful and gracious constitution; and I thank my parents for what they have done. I approve of it with all my heart; I consent

to it; I rejoice in it; I would be the Lord's; I will ratify and confirm that covenant; I will give myself to God, and join myself to his people, and bid a final adieu to my vain and sinful companions, and to all the ways of vanity and sin. I will avouch the Lord Jehovah to be my sovereign Lord and supreme good, through Jesus Christ; and give up myself to his service, to walk in all his ways, and keep all his commands, seeking his glory." This, O young people, is your duty, and this ought to be the temper of your minds; and this ought ye to do.

You cannot now therefore go on unmindful of God, in vanity and sin, at an easy and cheap rate. You cannot do it without treading under foot the goodness of Christ, and the good-will of your parents, and breaking your baptismal covenant. You cannot do it without practically forsaking the family of Christ, and the people of God, and joining yourselves to the family of Satan. And if you do so, verily, as St. Paul said in a like case, "your circumcision is made uncircumcision;" you renounce your baptism, and practically turn apostates; and will be treated as such, in that great day when Christ shall come to judge the world.

7. Young people are under special obligations to early piety, because youth is the time when persons usually have most of the strivings of God's Holy Spirit.

It has been commonly observed by those that have had much to do with souls, that mankind have usually more of the strivings of the Spirit, when they are young, than after they are grown old in years and old in sin. And it is no wonder, if persons when they are young grieve the Holy Spirit time after time, that they are gradually very much left and forsaken of God, and suffered to go on unmolested in their way to ruin in after years. Perhaps there are very few young people, but what are now and then met with, stopped in their career of vanity and sin, and brought to some serious thoughts of the state of their souls, and of their way of living, and to think what is like to be their end.

And this, O young people, I doubt not, has been the case with one and another of you, time after time. You have been awakened to some sense of your guilt and danger, and to serious thoughts of another world. At such times you have gone alone, and sat down solitary, and been ready to say, "Alas, what a wretch I am! What a dreadful life do I live! What a dreadful state am I in! And what will be my end!" At such seasons you think of your sins and vain courses with a heavy heart; you think of your frolics and merry-meetings with regret; and are ready to say, "I shall certainly perish at last,

if I go on in this way." Perhaps you have sometimes terrible apprehensions of death and judgment; and imagine how you will feel, when the Judge shall say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." It may be, you sometimes with fear and trembling think of the lake of fire and brimstone, of the wrath of a provoked God, of the anguish of a condemning conscience, of the eternity of hell torments, and the dreadfulness of the misery and despair of the damned; and are ready to say, "I am a fool to live as I do; I am distracted to go on any further; I will never do any more as I have done." And here you reckon up your beloved ways of sin, and form resolutions to leave them. "Farewell to my vain frolics, and farewell to my vain companions: I will now begin to be serious, and have done with my light, airy, unprofitable way of living; and for time to come, I will be constant in secret prayer; those leisure hours I used to spend abroad among vain companions, I will devote to reading the Bible and good books, to meditation and prayer." And thus you reflect, and thus you mourn, and thus you resolve upon a new life.

But perhaps in a few days afterwards your sense of things begins to wear off, you grow unwatchful, and a careless, vain temper by little and little returns upon you; your vain companions make you a visit, they invite you to some recreations, and you have a mind to go. It may be, on this occasion, your conscience reproves and warns you; telling you how things looked to you at such a time, and at such a place, and what solemn resolutions you made; and goes on to say, "If you do go with these, your old companions in sin, you will get to be as vain and careless as ever; you will presently have done with secret prayer, and with reading the Bible and good books; you will be just where you were, or rather in a much worse condition, and more unlikely ever to come to God; you know, that vain company has always been of hurtful tendency; and many a time has put an end to hopeful beginnings; and therefore you must not go." But when your conscience has been thus dealing with you, you have replied in some such foolish and self-flattering manner as this: "Pray let me go this once; I will be upon my guard, and behave seriously and civilly; so I hope it will do me no hurt: and I will come home in season, and not neglect my prayers." Thus you have quieted your conscience, and have gone with enticing companions; and so all your concern for your soul has gradually worn off; you have returned to folly, and have got as good a heart for vanity as ever; but secret prayer is now left off, and your Bible and good books

are all now neglected. Much so, perhaps, it has been with some of you, time after time.

And thus, as it is God's usual way, time after time, to meet with young persons, and awaken them, and try them, to see if they will return to the Lord, so, after a while, the Spirit of God being often grieved, their resolutions broken, the dictates of their consciences not obeyed, God begins to leave them: they grow more secure and hardened, and almost forget that they ever had any serious thoughts. And now they lay the reins loose, and give themselves a full indulgence; they spend their younger days in pride and wantonness, and their riper years in worldliness, and in contention; in family contentions, between the husband and the wife; in neighbor contentions, in society contentions: and at last they go down to the dead, and to hell. No doubt there are now thousands and millions in hell, who went thither in this very road.

And shall not this melancholy view of things, O young people, awaken you to reflect more seriously on your way, and to change your course? Can you, will you, dare you, go on any longer, in the very face of your own consciences, against light and knowledge, and in spite of all the inward warnings of God? O, stop this day, and come to an unalterable determination to go not one step farther in your foolish, vain, and sinful courses, lest you, as it were, tire the patience of God, and he swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest. Read Prov. i. 24—31, and consider what you do.

8. Consider how many resolutions and solemn vows you have made to God, and to your own consciences, in days past, that you would forsake all the ways of vanity and sin, and that in good earnest you would make a business of religion. And think of it seriously, that all these resolutions and vows are now as much binding in the sight of God, as ever they were, yea, as much as when they were newly made. You have broken them so often, perhaps, that they now seem to have lost all their binding nature, and you can now break them without horror. Once, perhaps, it seemed a dreadful thing, almost an unpardonable crime, to break your resolutions; but now you can do it, and never so much as reflect upon it; and yet those vows are as binding as ever. God remembers them all, and conscience will remember them all at the day of judgment, and in their light will your conduct be viewed. Think of it, O young man; think of it, O young woman; and tremble to see what you have been doing, and this day, even this hour, come to an unalterable determination, without any delay, by the help of God, to put all your old resolutions in practice.

9. Consider, if ever you intend to become religious, now is your time, your best time, and it may be your only time. It will be great stupidity and folly to flatter yourselves with the notion of a better time hereafter, for by every day's delay, your sins, your guilt, your hardness, and God's anger are increasing; and you ripening for ruin, and divine patience is growing weary. Youth is the best time to begin to seek after God. As hard as it is to bring yourselves to it now, yet it will be more difficult hereafter. As many temptations as you have now, yet you will have more, though perhaps of another sort, hereafter; and as little hope as there is now of your obtaining mercy, yet there will be less in years to come. So that now is your time, your best time, and it may be your only time; for unexpected death may stop your breath, and put an everlasting end to all your opportunities. O, therefore, delay not; but remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

Lastly, let it be considered, God claims a special propriety in your youthful days, as being the best, and most sprightly and active part of your lives. This we may learn from some injunctions under the Jewish dispensation. For God always insisted upon it, that the first and best of every thing should be in a peculiar manner devoted to him; the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast, and the first-fruits of all the increase of the field, were to be the Lord's. And the very best of their herds and of their flocks, were to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord. It was an abomination to bring their blind, their lame, and their sick for an offering, to sacrifice unto the Lord a corrupt thing, while they reserved the best for themselves. And surely it was perfectly reasonable, that God, who is the first and the best of beings, should have the first and the best brought him in sacrifice. How directly contrary, therefore, to reason and Scripture, are the natural notions of young people, yea, and of parents too, who are ready to think and say, "Certainly young people may be allowed some more liberty; there is no need that they should live by such strict rules; now is their time to take their pleasures; it is time enough for them to be serious and religious hereafter, when they are settled in the world." Just as if it was reasonable and fitting, in the nature of things, that the world, the flesh, and the devil, should have their first and best days; and that God should be turned off with hereafter, when they are become too old for carnal delights, for sports, and frolics, and vanity. "And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and

the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts."

That wretched plea, although it be a very common one, casts infinite contempt upon God; for it supposes that young people have good reason for it, and may very warrantably please themselves rather than God; may reasonably disobey his will, to have their own; may reasonably spend the best part of their lives in vanity and sin, and turn off God with an hereafter. Just as if themselves and their corruptions were more worthy of regard than the blessed God. It even supposes that there is more benefit and comfort in vain company, than there is in communion with God; yea, that to love and serve God is a piece of mere drudgery, which cannot be borne with; but that the ways of sin are ways of liberty. Blush, O parents! be ashamed, O children! to treat the Lord of glory, the delight of heaven, the joy of angels and saints, in such a contemptuous manner.

You that are in your youth, realize it, these are your best days, and therefore they must be the Lord's. These are your sprightly, active years, and therefore they must be devoted to him that made you, to serve him. Now your understanding is active, and your memory strong, your affections warm, and nature all alive. Now you are more free from worldly cares and encumbrances; now therefore you have many leisure hours for reading, meditation, and prayer; now you have, in a sense, nothing to do, but to seek after God. And surely now you must be the Lord's. These active powers, these blooming days, these pleasant years, these leisure hours, must all be consecrated to the Lord; nor can you, without abominable sacrilege, spend them away in vanity and sin.

Thus you lie under many and great obligations to early piety. Since God is what he is in himself; since you are rational creatures; since God has such an entire right to you, and authority over you, therefore you must be the Lord's. And since Christ has died for sinners; since you have been given up to God in baptism through him; since God has taken so much pains with you by his Spirit; since all the solemn vows you have made are still as binding as ever; and since this is your best time, yea, perhaps your only time, and a time that God claims a special propriety in; therefore you must be the Lord's, you must remember now your Creator in the days of your youth. There is no saying, nay. The obligations are infinite, and you must be the Lord's.

III. I proceed to offer some directions and motives, to assist

and encourage young people to early piety, to remember now their Creator in the days of their youth.

In the first place, I begin with directions. And in general, I lay this down for a certain maxim, that — whatsoever has a natural tendency to make you unmindful of God, must be conscientiously avoided; and whatsoever has a natural tendency to beget and cherish a sense of God in your hearts, must be carefully practised. — This the light of nature teaches; and so do the Holy Scriptures. (Heb. xii. 1,) "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us;" and (Eph. vi. 11,) "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand." Read also ver. 12 to the 18th. See also 1 Cor. ix. 24—27. Eph. iv. 29, 30. Are you under infinite obligations to remember God? By consequence you are under infinite obligations to avoid every thing that has a natural tendency to make you unmindful of him; and under infinite obligations to practise all those means which have a natural tendency to beget and cherish a sense of God in your hearts. You are not, therefore, at liberty to choose whether you will follow good directions, or not; but are under infinite obligations to hearken and obey. And here, —

1. I will point out some things that have a natural tendency to make you unmindful of God, which you must therefore industriously watch against and avoid; particularly, —

(1.) Indulging a vain, light, airy, jovial, wanton frame of spirit, has a natural tendency to banish all sense of God from the heart; and therefore must be industriously and continually prayed, and watched, and labored against. Young people are naturally inclined to such a temper, and it is their common way to give it a liberal indulgence; whereby all serious thoughts of God and religion, of death and judgment, of heaven and hell, are banished from their minds. Therefore the apostle Paul directs Titus to "exhort young men to be sober-minded." A temper contrary to sober-mindedness will be your ruin, if it be not mortified. Youthful levity and wantonness of mind will quench the motions of the Holy Spirit; it will stifle convictions; it will make you prayerless, and heartless in duty; it will extinguish all solemn sense of the vows of God upon you, and bring all your good resolutions to nothing. You have found it to be so in days past, and will find it so again, if you do not change your course. In the first place, therefore, begin here; no longer indulge such an unserious, light, and frothy temper of mind. Watch your heart and strive to be serious; labor to get and cherish a sense of God, and of things divine and eternal.

(2.) Spending precious time in idleness, is another thing of very bad tendency. Young people have many leisure hours lying upon their hands every week, which ought to be spent in reading, in meditation, and prayer; but it is the common way to spend them in nothing, or that which is worse than nothing. And hereby the world, the flesh, and the devil, have a continual advantage over them; by means of idleness they lie an open and easy prey to every temptation. O young people, therefore make this your constant rule, to employ all your leisure hours for the good of your souls, as you will wish you had done when you come to die. See Eph. v. 15, 16. Read and apply the counsel there given you.

(3.) Being much in vain company, whether at home or abroad, is another thing of bad tendency. In such company there is nothing but foolish jesting, sportful, wanton, and unprofitable discourse at best; whereby the heart is rendered still more vain and unmindful of God, and indisposed to every thing that is serious and good. Nothing can therefore be done in religion, until vain company be entirely and forever renounced. Leave such companions, therefore, you must; or be one of their companions in hell forever. (See Psalm i. 1, 2. Rom. xiii. 13, 14. Eph. iv. 29, 30, and v. 4. 1 Pet. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5.) "He that walketh with the wise shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." O, then, forsake the foolish and live. Seek some pious companion, and make such a one your friend, who will kindly instruct, advise, and admonish you, as there may be occasion. "For it is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools."

(4.) The gratifying of a favorite lust is of very dangerous tendency. Commonly there is some special beloved sin which lies in the way of young people's entering upon a religious life, and causes them to break a hundred good resolutions; often some secret sin, which it seems almost impossible to part with, and which they often fall into; whereby the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, conviction killed, conscience seared; and it is a wonder if it does not prove their final ruin. (Eph. v. 12.) Now, when this is the case, there is nothing to be done to any purpose, until this Achan be slain. With fasting and prayer, therefore, seeking to God for his grace, engage in the conflict with your beloved sin, and never leave, until you have gotten the victory.

(5.) In the last place, one of the greatest hinderances to serious piety among young people, in most towns and societies, is the habit of attending places of vain and fashionable amusements. This is a habit of long standing in the country; one generation

after another has been trained up in the practice of it, whereby a spirit of seriousness and sobriety has been almost rooted out of the land, though a land once famous for religion, for sobriety and universal temperance. Indeed, a few years ago this practice was generally laid aside, throughout all the country. When the Spirit from on high was poured out, when the great things of the eternal world were realized, when conscience was enlightened, awakened, in multitudes; then this practice was judged to be sinful. And no doubt there were hundreds, yea, thousands and thousands of vows and solemn resolutions, made among young people in New England, forever to lay aside the pernicious and insnaring practice of dancing. But since the Spirit of God has withdrawn, and sinners have fallen asleep again, the old practice is set up anew. And here, in this school of debauchery and corruption, the rising generation are training up in pride and vanity, in wantonness and levity; if not in drunkenness, and luxury, in lasciviousness, in gaming, cursing, and swearing. In a word, a passion for vain amusements and parties of pleasure, has been heretofore one principal means of banishing almost all appearance of serious religion, from the generality of young people especially. And it has been so of late very evidently.

Nor is it any wonder; for this is its natural tendency. It tends to stifle all serious reflections, to cherish a vain and airy temper, and to promote an idle and dissolute course of life. It tends to draw off the heart from God, to loosen the thoughts from eternal concerns, and to give the mind a relish for nothing but carnal and sensual pleasures. It tends to make young people forget that they are sinners, and that they must die and come to judgment. It tends to make them neglect reading, meditation, and secret prayer; and to put off religion, until they are settled in the world, under the vain notion of their having a better time then. It tends to render them deaf to all the inward warnings of God's Spirit, and to the checks of their own consciences; and deaf to all the outward calls of the gospel, and counsels of their ministers, their parents, and other spiritual friends; whereby all the means of grace become of no advantage to them. Or, if at any time a youth is met with by the Spirit of God, and awakened to some sense of his sin, and guilt, and danger; if a sermon reaches his conscience; if a fit of sickness, or the death of one of his companions, excites him to serious thoughts, and resolutions for a new life, a few amusements and gay parties will presently put an end to all. Hereby his serious impressions are worn off, and he quickly becomes as vain and thoughtless as ever.

These things being evident, vain amusements must therefore be forever renounced, if you would remember now your Creator in the days of your youth. That you are under infinite obligations to have a sense of God on your hearts, and such a sense of God as will effectually divorce you from all other things, and influence you to be entirely devoted to him; this has been already proved. Hence, to forget God, and to live unmindful of him, is infinitely sinful. To indulge yourselves, therefore, in what you know has a most natural tendency to make you do so, must be infinitely sinful too. But followng those vain amusements, you know, is a thing that has such a tendency.

And since such is the nature of that custom, hence every time you go to such a place or party, you turn your back upon the God of heaven, and practically say, "I love vain company more than I do communion with God." You turn your back upon a crucified Savior, and upon all the grace of the gospel, and practically say, "I do not care for the dying love of Christ, nor for the kind invitations of the gospel: I have something else to do besides repenting and returning to God through Jesus Christ; I must have my pleasures first; Christ must wait until this season is over, until I get settled in the world; it will be time enough then to hearken to him." Thus you make light of the gospel invitation, like those in Matt. xxii. 5. And what infinite contempt is herein cast upon God and Jesus Christ, and upon all the blessings purchased by his blood! But wherefore do the wicked condemn God, and tread under foot the Son of his love?

Who are you, and what are your circumstances, all this while? Why, you are fallen, guilty, polluted, condemned creatures; hanging over the grave and hell, by the brittle thread of a frail life; entirely at the mercy of an incensed Deity, in whose hand is your breath, and whom you are insulting and continually affronting to his face. And how does it look, to see condemned malefactors singing and dancing round the mouth of the pit, ready every moment to drop into hell; and kept out merely by the power and clemency of the God whom they despise, and whose redeeming grace they trample upon! Think of this, O young man; think of this, O young woman; and tremble to see what your temper and conduct have been: and now, this day, come to an unalterable determination, forever to renounce this vile practice. See your danger, break the snare, and escape; and if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.

Here, to fortify you against their enticement, I will briefly

consider and reply to some objections, that may be made against this part of my discourse.

Objection. But is there no recreation lawful for young people?

Answer. 1. No recreation is lawful, that naturally tends to make them unmindful of God, and to indispose them for a life of the strictest piety. (See Heb. xii. 1.) No recreation is lawful, that tends only to please the flesh. (See Rom. viii. 12, 13, and chap. xiii. 14.) No recreation is lawful, that cannot be done to the glory of God. (See 1 Pet. iv. 1—11.) Vain amusements therefore are not lawful, according to the Scriptures.

2. The only design of recreation is to fit us the better to attend on the great duties of life. We were made for the service of God; and all our time, even quite all of it, is to be spent in doing his will. And every employment undertaken by us, ought to be with a view to the great end for which we were made. (1 Cor. x. 31.) Such recreation, therefore, and so much of it as is necessary to fit us for the service of God, is lawful: but the rest, all the rest, is sinful. The practice of dancing, so prevalent among young people, like all other vain amusements, is sinful; for this is so far from having any tendency to fit them for the service of God, that it naturally tends to keep them secure in the service of sin.

3. No recreation is lawful, but that which, upon the whole, all things considered, is a duty. For all our time is to be entirely devoted to God, and all our powers employed in glorifying him. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) Every duty is to be gone about, out of love to God, in his fear and for his glory. But dancing is such a thing, in its nature and circumstances, that I do not see how it is possible young people should be influenced to it from love to God; or attend upon it in his fear, and with an eye to his glory. So far as these principles and views prevail in the heart, so far will the heart be entirely averse to dancing. And therefore this custom is not lawful, but forbidden, and to be shunned by all that would flee youthful lusts.

Obj. But Solomon says, there is a time for all things. (Eccl. iii.) And particularly, there is a time to dance. (ver. 4.)

Ans. Yes, and he says too, "There is a time to be born, and a time to die." Now, do you think that he means there is a time when it is lawful to be born, and lawful to die? Surely no; but only, that there is a time when men are born, and a time when they do die; for neither our birth, nor death, come under the notion of lawful, or unlawful. So that, from the context, it is evident that Solomon does not mean to say, in the words objected, what is lawful, or unlawful; but only

speaks of events happening, or that such and such things do come to pass.* And besides, that Solomon did not design to befriend dancing, is evident from Eccl. vii. 2—6.

Obj. Again, it is pleaded, that holy David danced before the ark.

Ans. But can any be so weak as to think that David was in a frolic at that time, a time of so great solemnity? No, he only expressed a religious pleasure, by "dancing before the Lord, and playing before the Lord."

Obj. Nay, Christ himself went to a wedding.

Ans. Yes, but he did not go to a ball, nor do any thing akin to dancing. He abstained from all appearance of such an evil.

Obj. When the prodigal son came home, there was music and dancing.

Ans. Christ is there only showing what joy there is in heaven over a sinner that repenteth, by a similitude borrowed from the common custom of this world; but says nothing about the lawfulness of that custom among his disciples. So in the parable of the unjust steward, (in the next chapter, Luke xvi.:) from his wicked policy, he takes occasion to recommend and inculcate spiritual wisdom; but we cannot from hence argue that Christ approved of the unrighteous conduct of that steward. And besides, Paul says expressly, "Be not conformed to this world;" and expressly forbids chambering and wantonness. And another apostle says, "If any man is merry, let him sing Psalms." And the whole tenor of the New Testament requires us "to pray always, to rejoice in the Lord always, to give thanks to God for all things, to admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to the Lord." And this is the Christian way of expressing joy and gratitude; but dancing and vain merriment shows a spirit entirely inconsistent with the true spirit of Christianity.

Obj. Yet the Scriptures nowhere forbid dancing.

Ans. But do not the Scriptures require us to love God with all our heart and with all our strength? And is not that inconsistent with a frolicsome spirit? Do not the Scriptures require us to lay up our treasure in heaven, and to have our conversation in heaven, to set our affections on things that are above, to pray always, and to rejoice in the Lord evermore? And are not all these things inconsistent with a frolicsome spirit? And do not the Scriptures forbid us to be carnally minded, to live

* "He doth not here speak of a time allowed by God, wherein all the following things may lawfully be done, which is wholly besides his scope and business, but only of a time fixed by God, in which they would or should be done." — Pool's annot. on the place.

after the flesh, to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof? etc. Do not the Scriptures require us to crucify the flesh, to mortify our members which are upon the earth, to deny ourselves? etc. Do they not require of young people in particular that they be sober, discreet, giving none occasion to despise their youth? And is not this inconsistent with a frolicsome spirit?

Besides, what do you think of those words of holy Job, (chap. xxi. 11, etc.,) where, giving the character of the wicked, he says, "Their children dance; they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" First, they indulge themselves in carnal sports and pleasures; and then, as a natural consequence, they say unto God, "Depart from us." In Job's opinion this is the character of the wicked. And is not this very exactly the description of the gay and licentious in our days? Again, what think ye of that of the prophet, (Isa. v. 11, 12:) "Woe unto you that rise early in the morning, that ye may follow strong drink; that continue until night, until wine inflame them, and the harp, and the viol, and the tabret, and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts?" The consequence whereof is this: "But they regard not the work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hands." And so again, (Amos vi. 1—6:) "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion; that put far away the evil day, that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls;" and what is the consequence?—"but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." And thus, you see, the Holy Scriptures set a life of carnal pleasure in just the same light that your faithful ministers do. In Scripture account, it is the way of wicked men, of secure sinners, of those that are at ease in Zion; and it makes them bid God depart from them; it makes them put far away the evil day, and disregard all the judgments of God, and calamities of his church and people. And the Holy Scriptures denounce an awful woe against all such.

Obj. "But if I renounce dancing and fashionable amusements, and bid farewell to my vain companions, and enter upon a life of serious and strict religion, I shall never be respected any more, nor take any more enjoyment of my life."

Ans. If your vain companions do not love you as they used to, yet they will fear and reverence you, as Herod did John the Baptist. And if you never have any more of your former carnal enjoyment, yet you may have spiritual consolation, which

is infinitely better. But make the worst of things, and suppose you must part with every thing that is at present dear to you, what then? Is not this our Savior's constant language, that no man can be his disciple, unless he denies himself, takes up his cross, and follows him; unless he heartily gives up his reputation and all carnal delights and pleasures, and is heartily willing to sacrifice every thing that is dear to him, even his very life, for Jesus Christ? But then Christ has assured such, that they shall have a hundred fold in the present world, besides eternal life in the world to come. Bid farewell, therefore, to a life of sensual pleasure; and no more turn aside after Satan; quit the tents of wickedness, and list under the banner of Jesus Christ. Let the world say what they will, follow ye the Captain of our salvation; thus go victorious and triumphant to eternal glory.

By this time I suppose, my young friends, you are all rationally convinced, if you have suitably attended to what has been said, that it is your duty, without any more delay, entirely to change your careless, vain way of living, and enter upon the great business of religion; yea, some of you, I hope, have already determined to do so. Yet I fear there may be some among you who are disposed to resist conviction, and harden your hearts, saying within yourselves some such words as these which follow.

Obj. "Well, others may do as they please; but for my part, I am resolved to take my pleasures, and live a merry life. Let ministers say what they list, I shall not regard it; if young people do not attend balls and theatres, and other parties of pleasure, they will do that which is as bad; and I hate your precise ways."

Ans. Just so Pharaoh of old impudently lifted up himself against the Almighty, and said, "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord; nor will I obey him." But wherein he exalted himself, God was above him; and thus spake the Lord to him: "For this very cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." So, thou stubborn and haughty wretch, gird up your loins, set your face like a flint, fight against heaven as much as you please, and scorn to mind the authority of Almighty God: but know it, from God Almighty, the hot thunderbolts of his vengeance, if you repent not, will ere long smite your guilty soul down to hell; and the God, whom you now contemn, will get himself a great name in your eternal destruction. Nor are you strong and hardy enough to bear up under the wrath of the Lord Almighty, and to endure the torments

of the lake of fire and brimstone. Alas! your courage will fail you, when the unquenchable flames have kindled upon you, and the smoke of your torments shall ascend up forever and ever. Then you will cry out in horror, in extreme anguish and despair, and will weep, and wail, and gnash your teeth. And it will add to your eternal torments, that this day you have been repeatedly warned, in the name of the living God, but hated instruction, and despised reproof.

You say, "Young people will do that which is as bad, if they do not attend balls and theatres." I only reply, then they will be as bad fools, and in the end shall they go to as bad a hell.

But, parents, — to turn myself to you in a short address, — will you stand by, and see your children drown themselves in perdition? Where are your former solemn engagements to God? Your children are the Lord's; you gave them to God in baptism. Remember the bonds you are under, and defer not to pay your vows. Where are your bowels of pity? Where is your parental authority? Who is on the Lord's side? Who? Their blood will be required at your hands, if through your neglect they run to ruin, and are finally lost. O, therefore, by your prayers and counsels, your example and authority, do all you possibly can to restrain and reform them. Remember the heavy judgments Eli brought upon his family by not restraining his children, when they made themselves vile. And consider, that bringing up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or teaching them to obey God, is a most effectual method to make them obedient to you, to train them up for being blessings in their place, and to render them great comforts to you in your old age; besides all the happy consequences that will accrue to them, in time and to eternity. Therefore resolve with good Joshua, that as for you and your house, you will serve the Lord.

Obj. But what if our children should lay aside all obstinacy, and put on an obedient, dutiful air, and say, "My father, my mother, I would by no means go contrary to you in this matter, nor would I willingly do any thing displeasing to God. I own that young people are too extravagant, but if dancing might be carried on civilly, and break up seasonably, what harm would there be in it? There is such a minister, and there is such a deacon, and there is such a good man, who let their children go to balls; and would you have us singular? And besides, if we never go abroad, we shall never know what genteel behavior is, nor how to conduct ourselves in company." And now what shall we say, or what shall we do, in such a case?

Ans. Were they my children, I would, in the first place, with all the love and goodness of a tender parent, assure them that I did not desire to deprive them of any liberty which, all things considered, would be reasonable, and for their good. And I would furnish them with such books as were proper, not only to instil religious sentiments into their hearts, but also to improve their minds. The money that others waste upon their children's pride and extravagances, I would lay out in valuable books for them. And besides, I would use my best skill to teach them a decent, an amiable, and agreeable behavior. I would also allow them, at proper times, to visit such of their conpanions as were discreet in their deportment, and religiously disposed; and I would teach them to be endearing in their carriage toward all. Nor do I doubt but that in this method of education, they would soon find such sensible advantages, as would effectually convince them that dancing is not at all needful to learn them polite behavior, or to fit them for a most agreeable conversation among the better sort of men. But then, at the same time, I would tell them, —

(1.) That as things are circumstanced, it is impossible to bring dancing under such regulations, as will prevent its tendency to be greatly detrimental to a life of serious piety; because the generality of young people are so very vain, and extravagant, and ungovernable.

(2.) I would tell them, that if they should go to balls, then either they must, contrary to their own consciences, do as others do, or else, in being singular there, be more ridiculous; and that therefore it is for their interest and reputation to keep away. And, —

(3.) I would tell them, that if balls were brought under such regulations as aforesaid, it would be impossible to maintain them: for those that only mean to gratify the flesh, would not like them, nor go to them, much sooner than to a praying meeting. And others, that only mean to use recreation in the fear of God and for his glory, that they may be the better fitted for the great duties of life; these would presently say, they do not want to dance, they had rather read and pray, and sing psalms together; and all with one consent would be for turning their frolics into meetings for religious exercises.

In the last place, —

(4.) I would tell them, that ministers, and deacons, and such as we are ready to hope are good men, are not our rule; nor will it be inquired, at the day of judgment, whether you were no worse than the children of such and such men. But the question will be, Were you really saints in Christ Jesus? And

was your conversation such as becometh saints? Did you live like children of the light, and of the day; having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness? Did you live soberly, not in chambering and wantonness, not in sport and vanity, not making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof, but putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, having the same mind in you as was in him, and imitating him in your whole temper and conduct? Did you live by the faith of the Son of God, and show your faith by your works? Or did you live like the children of this world, walking after your own lusts, in the way of your own hearts, and in the sight of your own eyes, even as others?

Thus in a kind, and rational, and scriptural way, I would deal with them, and endeavor to afford them full conviction.

But I hasten, —

2. To point out, very briefly, some things which have a natural tendency to beget and cherish a sense of God in the heart; or to direct you to the means instituted by God for that purpose, and in the use of which, it pleases God, of his sovereign grace, and according to the good pleasure of his will, to grant the necessary influences of his Holy Spirit for this blessed end.

Be much in reading the word of God, the Holy Bible, that best of books, that sacred treasure of divine knowledge. Spend many of your leisure hours in this profitable and delightful employment. And let your minds be always taken up with the great things therein revealed concerning God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit; concerning the fall of man, and the way of recovery opened in the gospel, the greatness of the salvation by Christ, your absolute need of it, and your obligations to Christ for it; concerning death and judgment, heaven and hell, and eternity: and while you read, labor for a realizing sense of those great truths. And in order to this, be much in secret prayer, in close meditation, and impartial self-examination. Daily retire into your closet, and spend many an hour alone in these religious exercises. And maintain an everlasting watchfulness over your hearts to keep out vain thoughts, and to suppress all bad inclinations. Moreover, seek out a serious religious companion, and make such a one your friend, your monitor, and helper; and sometimes spend an hour with him, in serious discourse together. Get acquainted with your pastor, and freely open to him your spiritual concerns, entreating him to be your faithful guide. Be swift to hear, and take heed how you hear, that the word preached may profit you. And, children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Diligently attend family duties every day; and let the Sabbath

of the Lord be carefully observed by you. Be diligent in the use of all the means of grace. Be resolute, be engaged; let no time run to waste; exert yourselves to the utmost, in striving that you may enter in at the strait gate, and escape the wrath to come. And never rest in any thing short of a saving conversion to God, nor be content without an assurance of the divine favor, and a life of communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. In a word, never rest satisfied without obtaining the faith of God's elect, and such a holy, heavenly temper of mind, as was described under the first general head, when I showed what is implied in remembering God.

Only let it be minded here, that I do not give you these directions under a notion of putting you upon making amends to the law and justice of God for your past sins, by your repentance and reformation, and of recommending yourselves to the divine favor by any works of righteousness that you can do; nor under a notion of your having ability to renew your nature unto holiness, by the exertion of your own powers. No, but rather under a notion, that in the use of these means, you may come to be convinced, by the Spirit of God, of the insufficiency of your own righteousness, and to be made sensible of your spiritual impotency; and so be led to see your need of both righteousness and strength from Jesus Christ, the one Mediator and only Savior; in whom all fulness dwells, to whom you must look, on whom you must trust, from whom you must derive all things, (John xv. 1—6. Rom. x. 3, 4,) in the diligent and constant believing use of all the means of grace. But I must not enlarge.

In the second place, I am to offer some arguments, or motives, to encourage and persuade young people to the pursuit of early piety. I have already shown the many and great obligations that lie upon you to remember God, to have a sense of him on your hearts, even so as to be divorced from all other things, and entirely devoted to him; and have showed, that those obligations are absolutely binding, and of everlasting force; and so I have considered early piety as a matter of duty. But now I come to view the matter in a different light, to consider it as a point of prudence, a matter of interest and expediency. For it is not only your duty, O young people, early to devote yourselves to God, and to a life of strict piety; nor only a duty to which you are under infinite obligations; but it is also your wisdom, as it is for your interest; unspeakably for your advantage; more for your interest, than to be made worth thousands a year; more for your interest, than to be adopted

into the family of a king; yea, more for your interest, than to be made lords of all this lower world. The service of God is certainly, then, your most reasonable duty.

Let it be particularly considered here, —

1. There is an unspeakable pleasure in religion itself, antecedent to all other considerations; yea, joy unspeakable and full of glory. (1 Pet. i. 8.) A sinful state in Scripture account is a state of death, but "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Yea, it is eternal life begun in the soul; it is the dawning of eternal glory. There is an unspeakable pleasure in seeing and knowing God to be just such a one as he is; an unspeakable pleasure in having a sense of God on the heart; of his all-seeing eye and all-governing hand, and of the infinite moral excellency of his nature, discovered in his moral government of the world, in the law and in the gospel, in the nature of the first covenant and of the second. It is this that ravishes all the heavenly world, and makes them in ecstasy cry out, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of thy glory." It is this that will be the grand foundation of the blessedness of angels and saints to all eternity. They shall see God, they shall behold him in his glory; their hearts shall be everlastingly full of a sense of his transcendent beauty. (Matt. v. 8. John xvii. 3. 1 John iii. 1, 2.) The moral excellency of the divine nature gives a lustre to all the perfections of God, and speaks him infinitely glorious in being what he is; and here is the foundation of that infinite happiness he has in the enjoyment of himself. It is this that fills all heaven with glory; and it is this that makes a little heaven begin to dawn in the hearts of the godly here on earth. Indeed, a true spiritual sense of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, is the beginning of heaven, and a foretaste of eternal happiness. And therefore in Scripture it is called eternal life. (John xvii. 3.) There is an unspeakable pleasure in being divorced from all other things, and in cleaving to that best of beings. It was so sweet to the Psalmist, that he cries out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth I desire besides thee." To love him, to delight in him, to live upon him, in this present evil world, is near akin to heaven. To be transformed into his image, is angelic blessedness; to be entirely devoted to him, to live a life of communion with him, and obedience to him, affords the most refined pleasure, "sweeter than the honey, yea, than the honey-comb." In a word, to have a spirit of pride and vanity subdued in us, to have a spirit of worldliness and sensuality mortified, and to be strictly

pious, is the happiest thing, that can possibly be had in this present world. "To be spiritually minded, is life and peace." Leave therefore the cruel slavery of sin, the vile servitude of gratifying your corruptions, and no longer love death, but come now and be blessed; begin now to enter into the joy of your Lord. He that commits sin is the servant of sin; but if you will be Christ's disciples, you shall be free indeed; and the glorious liberty of the sons of God is infinitely preferable to the licentious liberty of the children of this world. His yoke is easy, his burden is light; wisdom's ways are pleasant, and all her paths are peace. It is a thousand times sweeter to mourn for sin, than to commit it; to be weaned from the world, than to possess it all; to have pride mortified, than to have it gratified; to enjoy communion with God, than to be in vain company; to forgive an injury, than to revenge it; to love enemies, than to hate them. Yea, the seeming pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, carry a sting in them, and are so many keen torments, compared with the sweetness there is in the ways of God. All the generation of God's children can witness to the truth of these things. Therefore remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth; and so begin early to be happy. Besides, —

2. Great and many are the superadded privileges you will be entitled unto, if you indeed become religious betimes. Your sins shall be forgiven forever. God Almighty will become your everlasting friend. You shall be taken into the family of God, and he will be your father. Christ will be your Savior. The Holy Spirit will be your sanctifier. He that governs the whole world, will be your powerful guardian and protector. His eye will be over you for good. He will give you as much of the good things of this world as he thinks best; and will teach you to choose, that he should be your continual carver. He will make all things work together for your good. He will train you up for eternal glory, and at last bring you to his heavenly kingdom. Instead of being in the guilty, destitute, and forlorn state of nature, you shall even while in this world have a God to go to; an almighty, all-sufficient, infinitely glorious, infinitely gracious God and Father, to go to; to go to under all spiritual distresses, and under all outward trials; to go to in sickness, and when you come to die; and after death, guardian angels will convey your souls to the world of the blessed, and Christ will own you as his members before all the heavenly host, and God will openly acknowledge you for his children. All the inhabitants of heaven will congratulate your

arrival there, and rejoice over you as joint-heirs with them of eternal glory; and here shall you be everlastingly and perfectly blessed, in the open vision and full fruition of God and the Lamb.

If, therefore, you desire heavenly blessedness, and have any relish for divine pleasure; if you have a heart to be divinely happy, in time and to eternity; O hearken, this day, to the counsel in our text, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

But if you have no relish for spiritual and heavenly blessings, no regard to God, nor care of your souls, and cannot be persuaded by any argument whatsoever; if you are entirely attached to the flesh and the world, and resolutely set in your ways of sin and vanity; see, hell is before you; understand what you do; and consider what will be your end.

Alas! such is the temper of mankind, that no arguments, as of themselves, will effectually divorce them from their lusts, and turn them to God, and to real religion. Their alienation from the life of God, their enmity to his holy law and gospel, is unconquerable, by any but a special divine influence. (Rom. viii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) And since this is the case, it is infinitely fit, in the nature of things, that the great Governor of the world, if he does save any of this guilty, rebellious race, should be at liberty to save whom he pleases. He has declared himself reconcilable to any that will return to him through Jesus Christ. But since none will be persuaded to this, since none will do this, if they can help it, he is certainly now at liberty; he may let sinners take their course and go on to perdition, if he pleases; or he may have mercy on whom he will have mercy. O, see your entire dependence on sovereign mercy for salvation; and be looking diligently lest you fail of the grace of God, by resisting the Holy Spirit, and wilfully indulging unbelief and impenitence.

Young people fondly flatter themselves, that hereafter they shall have a better time, and then they will repent, then they will believe and obey the gospel; and so they quiet their consciences for the present, and securely give way to delays from time to time. But, alas! they understand not what it means to remember their Creator, or become truly religious; nor how averse to it they are, as of themselves; nor do they consider that this very temper of mind, which makes them unwilling to turn to God now, will always do so, if sovereign grace do not overrule and prevent it. They imagine not how the case really stands; nor do they once glance at half the misery and

danger attending their condition. But O the safety and blessedness of such as are early seized by divine grace, and brought to an early acquaintance with God in Christ; who know the things of their peace, and choose the good part; who taste the sweetness of religion now, and are training up for eternal glory in the world to come! O the happy condition such of you are in! Adore sovereign and distinguishing mercy; be deeply sensible of your obligations to God; sing the praises of redeeming love; and let all your days be devoted to Him who has called you by his grace, who hath delivered you from the power of darkness, and translated you into the kingdom of his dear Son; to whom be dominion and glory forever. AMEN.

FAMILY RELIGION.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."
Joshua xxiv. 15.

Joshua, the great leader and renowned commander of the Jewish people, being grown aged, summoned all the tribes of Israel to come and hear his last and dying words to them; in which, First, He commemorates the divine favors which God vouchsafed to them, and intermixes, here and there, promises and threatenings to prevail with them the more effectually. Second, He exhorts them to a sincere and entire walking before the Lord in their lives, without the least revolting to their former idolatrous practices. "Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord." And, Third, He renews the covenant between God and the Israelites. (verses 14—26.) And to confirm and establish them in the way of the Lord, he puts them first upon their free choice. He would have them embrace the worship and service of God upon deliberate and serious thought, and after a due consideration of things, to arrive at last to full purposes and resolves of adhering to the ways of God. "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." Not that Joshua, by thus speaking, leaves them altogether to their liberty, or that he discharges them of their obligation to serve God; but by this proposal he intends to try them, namely, whether they will fall off unto the Gentile idolatry and superstition, or whether they would freely and voluntarily devote themselves to the service of the true God. And that this good man and righteous governor might actuate and encourage this numerous people to persevere in the latter, he propounds his own example, and that of his family. "As for me and my

house, we will serve the Lord." This is Joshua's brave and undaunted resolution concerning himself; and yet this was his proper charge, touching his own family and his relations. That charge then resolves itself naturally into these three propositions: —

1. It ought to be the sincere resolution and the particular endeavor and study of every soul to serve the Lord.

2. It is the duty, and should be the resolve and constant practice, of those who have the charge of families, to promote the service of God among them — to see that they, as well as themselves, mind the great work of God. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

3. This resolution of serving God must be taken up, and the practice of it observed, notwithstanding the indifferency of others.

I will waive the first and last propositions, and confine myself to the second. I design this plain discourse for householders, and such whom God hath favored with children or intrusted with servants. The main thing I intend is, to show how parents and heads of families may rightly discharge their duty; how they may cherish the love and the fear of God amongst those who live with them, and are daily under their tuition. To give you full satisfaction as to this weighty matter, I offer to you the following directions.

1. Take care that your children be admitted to Christian baptism. You that are parents must need think it to be a duty incumbent on you to bring your children to the sacred font, and to initiate them into the congregation of Christ's people by this holy ordinance. The practice of the first and early converts of the church will convince you of the necessity of this. They took care to have their *families* baptized, as well as themselves. Thus, concerning that eminent convert Lydia, it is recorded, that she was baptized and her household. And it is expressly said of the converted jailer, that he was baptized and all his. Forget not, then, the primitive usage of the Christian church, founded on that commission given by Christ to his apostles, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Dedicate your children to God, by celebrating this evangelical institution.

2. Instruct your children in the principles of Christianity. You ought to be very solicitous to furnish yourselves with divine knowledge, that you might be in a capacity to instruct those that are under your care. As parents and masters, you must inform your children and dependents in the essential

points of Christianity, such as these: "That there is a God — that he is a being of infinite perfections, who is the Maker and Governor of all things, on whom we all depend, and from whom we receive all the good things which relate either to this life or the next — that our first parents, Adam and Eve, transgressed the divine commandments, and thereby involved us, and all their posterity, in sin and guilt — that when mankind was thus fallen into a wretched and miserable condition, God was pleased to promise, and at length, in the fulness of time, sent his only-begotten Son to redeem and save all those who believe in him — that this Redeemer took upon him a human nature, and suffered death upon the cross, and by the all-sufficient merit of his sufferings, obtained for us the pardon and remission of our sins, and purchased for us eternal life and happiness — that the conditions or qualifications of our pardon are faith, repentance, and new obedience — that these qualifications, which fit us for everlasting happiness, are wrought and produced in us by the Holy Spirit, and are not the effects of our natural goodness and ability — that this divine and merciful Savior rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of his Father, making intercession for us — that this Savior shall be the Judge of the world — and that, in order to the last judgment, we shall all rise again with our own bodies, and stand before that great tribunal — that according to the sentence which shall then proceed from his mouth, the final and everlasting state of every man shall be determined — that the wicked shall be damned to everlasting fire, and the righteous conveyed to everlasting life and bliss.

Thus let your children and those under your charge be acquainted, betimes, what your religion means, and what are the chief ingredients of it. And it would be requisite, in order to your conscientious discharge of that task, that you thoroughly persuade *yourselves* that knowledge is the foundation of religion, and that it is impossible for any one to be a good Christian if he be ignorant of the truths of the gospel; for knowledge is absolutely necessary to a religious and godly practice. He that doth not act upon principles is no true Christian. Consider and weigh this well, and then you will be convinced of the necessity of laying the foundation aright — of instructing those that are under your care in the doctrines of the Christian faith — of *grounding* them in the substantial principles of your profession.

3. Instruct them in the practical part of Christianity; for knowledge is designed in order to practice. Therefore those of you who have the government of a family are to be con-

vinced that those that are under your care must reduce all their knowledge into practice, and show the virtue of their principles in their lives and manners. As for example, the knowledge of the being of a God, the Almighty Creator and Disposer of all things, must exert itself in practice: that is, we ought to pay the utmost reverence, obedience, and homage to him in whom we live, move, and have our being, and from whose bountiful hand we are supplied with all our good things.

Again, the knowledge of our original depravity and corruption, caused by the fall of our first parents from God and happiness, should have that good effect upon us, namely, to beget a profound humility in us, and to make us continually live in a sense of our natural weakness and inability, and to depend entirely on God for his aid and assistance. So, again, the doctrine of Christ redeeming us should be efficacious in our lives, and cause us to do and suffer any thing for that Jesus who by his meritorious undertaking and dying an accursed death for us, put us into a state of life and blessedness. Further I will instance that necessary doctrine of Christianity — the coming of Christ to judgment. What a mighty influence should this have on our thoughts, feelings, and actions! Seeing we must one day be called to a strict account for all we have thought, said, and done, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? I will instance one principle more; and that is concerning rewards and punishments in the judgment, than which nothing is more evident in the Scriptures. This part of divine knowledge must tend to, and end in, a suitable practice, or else it is of no use; and truly it naturally tends to that end. For if there be a heaven and a hell, and that of eternal duration, to recompense the righteous for their good actions, and to punish the wicked for their evil ones, then certainly the serious consideration of this will powerfully excite to a religious and conscientious walking before God. For without holiness none shall see him in heaven; and for want of holiness mankind shall be eternally excluded from heaven and happiness.

Thus, in brief, I have let you see that the practical part of Christianity is aimed at, and designed, in the very principles of it, to secure holy living, and therefore those that have the charge of families must not content themselves with instructing their children and servants in these principles, but they must make them serviceable to the actual production of all virtues, and godliness, and performance of all duties required by Christianity. You must set before your charge, as matter of their practice, all the several parts and branches of the Christian laws. You must acquaint them, in the first place,

what is their particular duty towards God — what are those inward and mental acts of devotion which are required of them, such as the exercising our faith, our hope, and our trust in him, fearing and reverencing him, above all, admiring and loving him, not only for his goodness to us, but for his own matchless excellences and perfections. They must also be taught what are the eternal acts of honor and worship; namely, fervent prayer, attentive hearing of the gospel, partaking of the sacraments, and that they are to behave themselves humbly, reverently, and devoutly, when they approach to God in any of these ordinances. In the next place, they must be informed concerning their proper and peculiar duty towards their neighbors, which consist in acts of justice, of truth and faithfulness towards all we converse with, of unfeigned benevolence to all the human family, and delighting to do charitable offices to them. It consists also in defending them from oppression and all injuries — in assisting them in their distresses — in forgiving and passing by their offences towards us — in relieving them in their straits and necessities — and, in short, in doing all the good we can to them, both in respect to their bodies and their souls. There is also a particular and proper duty owing to ourselves; and that comprises in it meekness and gentleness, industry and diligence, moderation and temperance, and a sober use of all the good things of this life — continence and chastity, and lastly contentedness in that state in which God has placed us. Thus you and your house, you and those committed to your care, must serve the Lord, and thus you must instruct them how to serve him.

You must likewise instruct them in the duties they owe to their parents and masters. Children have their proper lesson set them. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and mother." And you that are *parents* have *your* duty prescribed to you, and it is briefly summed up in these words of the apostle: "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Servants have their particular duty alloted them. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart." And you that are masters have your duty assigned in the same place. "Ye masters, do the same things unto them," — that is, after the same manner, namely, as to Christ, so as to approve yourselves to him, — "forbearing threatening," — that is, all harsh and rigid treating of them, — "knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is

there respect of persons with him." Thus you are not only to acquaint those that are under your care of their duty to God, and their fellow-men, and themselves, but also to you as you stand in that relation to them. And you must likewise acquaint yourselves with the duties that belong to you, considered in the capacity of parents and masters.

4. It is not sufficient that those who have the care of families instruct the members thereof in their duty, but it is moreover required that they excite them to the discharge and performance of it. For we find that there is a natural propensity in all mankind to forget and neglect what is enjoined upon them. Wherefore there is a necessity of urging this head of my discourse. It is indispensably requisite that you call upon your children and family to be diligent in their duty, to live and act according to those instructions that you have instilled into them. And you must frequently inculcate and repeat your admonitions, your counsels, your advice; and to make them effectual, it will be requisite that you cherish your endeavors by encouraging them; and that you may do by representing the glorious consequences of early piety to them.

5. It is not enough to excite and encourage them, but you must reprove them when they do amiss. This is as necessary as the other, for vice is thought to be encouraged when it is not checked and rebuked, and thence it increases and gathers strength. If, therefore, you would indeed reform your families, you must not forget to create a dread of sin in your children and servants, — you must frown them out of their faults, — you must continually reprove sin wherever you find it, and if need be, *sharply* animadvert upon it, and correct and punish it. And let me tell you, that will be the best way to show your dominion, and to exert that superiority which God hath given you within your own walls.

6. Having directed you to the instructing of your families in the principles and grounds of religion, and in the duties that respect practice, especially those towards yourselves and your fellow-men, and having advised you to back these instructions with the most skilful excitements, with the most winning encouragements, and with reproofs and severities when there is occasion, my next direction is, that you would intermix *all* with fervent and devout prayer; for that is effectual towards all that hath been said before. Without this, your repeated instructions, your pathetic exhortations, your most winning encouragements, and your sharpest rebukes, will be to little purpose. You must remember what the Scripture saith, — every thing is of God, by the providence of God. And prayer is that which calls down the blessing from Heaven. In a more

especial manner, the domestic blessings are of God by prayer. And families can be prospered by no other way; which I conceive to be the meaning of Psalms cxxvii. 1 — "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." By building the house, is meant the increasing and flourishing of the family. Household affairs are succeeded and prospered by the divine blessing upon them. Being, then, thoroughly persuaded of this, betake yourselves to the throne of grace; humbly supplicate and implore the divine assistance; for unless God adds a blessing to your instructions and exhortations, and all your other endeavors, they will be wholly inefficient, and your children, those under your care, will have no real gain and benefit by them.

7. Bring up those that are under your care to the reading and hearing of God's word. "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?" saith the Psalmist, and the answer follows: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." That is, it will be a light unto his feet and a lantern to his paths, to direct and conduct him to the ways of holiness. Be conversant in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation. And as you must give attendance to reading, as the Scriptures command, so you must reckon it your duty to bring your family with you to hear the word of God preached, expounded, and applied. This is no indifferent matter, which you may omit and neglect as you please. For this sacred institution is the appointment of the gospel, and was instituted on purpose to be the great channel of conveyance of truth and the Divine Spirit into the hearts and lives of men. It was designed to be the power of God unto salvation; and therefore, if we despise this, we neglect our salvation and happiness. Come, then, yourselves, and bring your families to the place where God's word is dispensed, and see that they behave themselves reverently and devoutly there — that they hear with attention and godly fear.

To perfect and sum up all, the last direction I leave with parents and masters is this — Be sure that you set your children and servants a good example. If you be defective here, all that hath been said is lost; all the advice I have tendered comes to nothing. Wherefore let me entreat you to finish all by the example of your own practice and behavior.

Thus I have briefly and plainly set before you your duty as you have the charge of a family. I wish you may reduce it to practice, and then you will soon find the good and happy effects of it. Let it be your earnest prayer, therefore, that God would vouchsafe to seal these instructions on your souls, that the impressions of them may be apparent in your lives. To this

purpose I proceed to apply so useful and important a doctrine. And that shall be by way of exhortation.

1. Reflect on yourselves and your practice, and if you find that you have neglected that great duty I have been speaking of, and much more if it appear that you have encouraged your children or servants in vice and profaneness, by not rebuking them, or by your bad example, let me request you, in the *first place*, to lament and bemoan your past behavior, and with hearty remorse and repentance beg pardon for it. Endeavor to see your errors and failures, and forthwith forsake them, and turn into the right way; amend your lives, and betake yourselves for the future to a careful discharge of your duty toward your families. Let religion, and the serious practice of it, flourish in your habitations. And it ought to be your sincere resolution and constant practice to take care that the service of God be promoted among you. Let every master of a family say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Let every mistress of a family say with Esther, "I and my maids will do so likewise." (Esther iv. 16.) You, whom God hath intrusted with children, ought to improve every opportunity to instruct them in the way of holiness, and to reform their lives and conversation. Be resolved that nothing shall divert you from your duty: thus be in good earnest, and, by divine grace assisting you, you will be enabled to complete the work.

And now, to further you in this necessary work of instructing and reforming your families, and consulting the spiritual good of your domestic circles, I will set before you the examples of some of those that have been eminent in their duty; not only the pious governor in my text, but others mentioned in the sacred word. Remember how pleasing it was to God that Abraham, Jacob, Job, and other religious parents, took care of their families. The first of these is characterized by God as one who would *command* his children and his household to keep the way of the Lord. (Gen. xviii. 19.) For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. And Jacob enjoined his household and all that were with him to put away the strange gods from among them. (Gen. xxxv. 2.) And Job, when his family had done any thing amiss, offered sacrifice and prayed for them. (Job i. 5.) And David was an excellent instance of this. (Ps. ci. 2.) "I will walk," said he, "within my house with a perfect heart;" that is, I will give a pattern of uprightness at home. "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me; he that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that

telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." He would not entertain in his family any persons that were dissolute in any kind whatsoever. In the New Testament, Cornelius is represented to be one that feared God with all his house. And we read that Timothy was instructed by his grandmother and mother in the law of God and the principles of religion. And this was their commendation to all the worthy Christians — "Go thou and do likewise." Let your practice be suitable to the example of these holy men and women, and see that the great God is served and honored under your roof. To enforce this exhortation, I will request you to let the following considerations be duly regarded: —

1. Consider the necessity of a pious education — of a timely and early preparing young people for the receiving of religion. It has been observed that the remissness in bringing up youth is the great cause of the corruption of manners in the world, and that the early instilling of good principles is the best and only remedy against that corruption, and is absolutely necessary to the rectifying of mankind. And it is doubtless so; for if the youth are brought up in a loose and licentious way of living, if they are not kept back from, but suffered to run into all manner of wickedness which this inconsiderate age is liable unto, they will be but a plague to mankind. And then you may say of them, as the prophet saith, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." Therefore, if you desire that your children should ever become godly and religious, be sure to sow early the seeds of piety. Give them early religious instruction. Watch over and restrain them from sin.

2. Consider that all your care and provisions for the temporal concerns of your families will avail nothing without piety. Ahithophel was careful to set his house in order, that is, to dispose of his possessions in the best way for the worldly advantage of his family; but you know how he neglected his greatest concern. Such is the preposterous wisdom of wicked and worldly men; but it is indeed the greatest folly imaginable. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" — if he shall look after and procure the temporal welfare of himself and his family, and yet disregard his own and their everlasting happiness? There is an admirable passage in one of the ancients, — "He that makes a youth a person of worth, namely, by his true principles and behavior, gives him much, and makes him a very wealthy man, though he leaves him but little." May not this much now be said of a youth religiously and piously educated? Such a one is a

person of worth indeed, and is master of the greatest and most valuable riches, though his parents bestow but little upon him. Here, then, is your great concern, who are intrusted with those that are young. You must endeavor to imbue them, while they are young, with religious principles, and to lay their foundation right.

3. Consider that your promoting religion in your families will conciliate for you a reverence and awe in the hearts of those who are under your government, and consequently they will prove faithful and obedient to you. As you are parents and masters, you look for respect and obedience from your children and servants. But if you be instrumental to make them religious and godly, you will thereby much more assure yourselves of their respect and duty to you. Then your authority will be confirmed, and all your commands will be readily obeyed; for a true sense of religion on the mind is the most powerful spring of obedience. This presents a strong motive to all parents to train their children religiously.

4. Consider that religion will draw down a blessing upon your families. Obed-edom's house fared the better for the ark being under his roof. You may expect that all the concerns of your family will prosper, if you sincerely advance in it the interests of religion. If your houses be the habitations of holiness, if piety take up its residence there, you are in the right way of succeeding well in whatever you undertake. I beseech you, therefore, ask yourselves whether religion finds reception within your walls, — whether the members of your family be instructed aright in their duty, — whether you take care to infuse the principles of godliness into the minds of your children, and those there are under your care betimes. If you do so, you may be sure the blessing of God will rest on you and yours.

To conclude: What a happiness would accrue to you, if you would be persuaded to put the preceding rules in practice — to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In so doing, you would not only fit them to do the duties which they owe to their parents, (and you cannot but take great complacency and delight in seeing your children perform all their duties,) but hereby they will also be fitted to serve God in whatever station he shall see good to place them in the world. You may not only have occasion to rejoice to see your household walking in the ways of holiness here, but you may also meet them at your Father's right hand in his kingdom, and with them sing eternal hallelujahs to the grace of your Redeemer in the future world.

AN ELECTION SERMON.*

RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION; BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE.
Proverbs xiv. 34.

SOON after Solomon came to the throne of Israel, the Lord appeared unto him, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon, desirous above all earthly things to be qualified for his high station, requests neither riches nor honor, nor length of days, nor the life of his enemies, but rather prays for "an understanding heart." And this prayer "pleased the Lord." God loves to see rulers more concerned about their duty than about their private interest. A benevolent, generous frame of heart, prompting them to do all the good in their places that they can, is pleasing to the Lord. Wherefore God heard his prayer, and gave him a wise and understanding heart, as he desired; and long life, riches, and honor, besides. "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largenesss of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore; and Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt; for he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all nations round about. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom; and he spake three thousand proverbs," one of which was this — "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." — These words, then, come recommended to our most serious consideration, as containing one of the wise maxims of the wisest of men, a chief political principle of the greatest politician; and they furnish us with a subject proper for this occasion. Here, then, let us inquire,

I. What is meant by righteousness.

* Delivered before the General Assembly of the colony of Connecticut, at Hartford, on the day of the anniversary election, May 13, 1762.

II. How righteousness exalteth a nation.

III. How sin is a reproach to any people.

And then, —

IV. I will endeavor to show, that the only way for us in this colony to be a happy community, is to be a righteous people.

I. In the first place, we are to inquire, What is meant by righteousness? And no doubt the word is designed to comprise all moral virtue in general; as it was only in this large and comprehensive sense of the word, that national prosperity and happiness were promised to righteousness under the Jewish dispensation. But, then, still it may be inquired, What is the sum of moral virtue, and how does righteousness naturally comprise the whole?

To view beings and things as they are, and to be affected and act accordingly, is the sum of moral virtue. All moral virtue is frequently, in the sacred writings, summed up in one thing, under one comprehensive name. For, as every moral virtue grows up from one root, and is therefore radically but one thing, so, with the greatest propriety, all may be called by one name. Thus *love*, in fact, is the whole of moral virtue; and thus *love* is the name given to the whole, in that brief summary of the divine law given by our blessed Savior, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" and "Thou shalt *love* thy neighbor as thyself." Love is radically the whole of that duty which God requires of man. "For on these two commands hang all the law and the prophets." Yea, love is the sum of all God's moral perfections, and of all holiness in all holy beings in the universe; for the moral law is the transcript of God's moral perfections. The divine nature is the original, the divine law is an exact transcript; and in a perfect conformity to this law consists the perfect holiness of angels and saints in heaven; and in an imperfect conformity to it, consists the imperfect holiness of saints on earth; and the perfect mediatorial righteousness of Jesus Christ is but a perfect conformity to the same rule through a course of the severest trials. For the holiness of God and Christ, of angels and saints in heaven, and of saints on earth, is of the same nature, how different soever in degree and in circumstances. For there is but one kind of true holiness in the universe; and all consists in love. *God is love;* and love is the sum of all that duty which God requires of man. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But love to God and to our neighbor supposes that we view them as they are, and it consists in our being affected

accordingly, and this affection naturally excites to an answerable conduct.

And to love God with all our hearts, is only to give him his due; for he deserves it at our hands. And to love our neighbor as ourselves, is only to feel towards them as we would have them feel towards us; that is, to do as we would be done by. And therefore to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves, is in its own nature right. He, then, who is thus affected towards God and his neighbor is, in Scripture, called a righteous man. He is rightly affected. He feels as he ought to do. His heart is right. And so he is called a righteous man. And therefore *righteousness* is another name used in Scripture as comprehending the sum of all virtue, even as the word *sin* is used to comprehend all vice. Thus, in our text, righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people.

II. Righteousness exalteth a nation, as it is in itself an honorable thing; as it has a natural tendency to make a nation prosperous and happy; and as it will be attended with the special smiles of Him who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and, sitting at the head of the universe, can build up or pull down nations at his pleasure.

Righteousness is in its own nature an honorable thing. Yea, among all the variety of excellences in the universe, there is none of equal dignity with this. It renders God glorious, angels lovely, and heaven a place of consummate bliss. Infinite knowledge, almighty power, and universal dominion, render the Deity great; but it is righteousness, or the moral rectitude of his nature, that renders him glorious. Could we conceive an almighty being at the head of the universe, able with the utmost ease to accomplish all his purposes, but entirely devoid of moral rectitude, whatever reason there might be to fear and tremble before him, there would be no ground for any one in the intellectual system to esteem, love, and honor him. Perfect moral rectitude is the highest glory of the divine nature itself; yea, it is radically the sum total of all that beauty there is in the Deity. It is this that renders every other attribute of God amiable, and causes the divine Being to appear glorious in the eyes of angels, in whatever point of light they view him.

Is he almighty, so that none can resist him; is he all-knowing, so that none can circumvent him; is he supreme, so that none can call him to an account; and is he an absolute sovereign, so as to be entirely at liberty to conduct according to the counsel of his own will; and does his providence extend to all things in the universe; and is this a settled maxim with him,

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure"? Yet, as he is a being of perfect moral rectitude, he is not the less, but rather infinitely the more glorious, in the eyes of the angelic world. They rejoice in his almightiness and infinite wisdom, they exult in his supremacy and absolute sovereignty, and are ravished in a view of his universal government, because it is absolutely perfect. They cry one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

It is not with the great Monarch of the universe, as it is many times with earthly princes. They often abuse their power and their supremacy to mischievous purposes. The thought that there is none above them to call them to an account, emboldens them to cruel and barbarous deeds; and this, amidst all their external grandeur and glory, sinks their character and renders them odious and contemptible. All their royal dignity loses its lustre while they are without that moral rectitude which exalts the great Monarch of the universe above all blessing and praise. For, concerning God, it may be said, that great as his power is, he never used it to oppress the meanest subject in his dominions; and absolute as his sovereignty is, he never made one unwise decree. His law is holy, just, and good, like its author; perfect in beauty, without a blemish; sweeter than honey, yea, than the honey-comb; and all his conduct towards his creatures is so exactly right, and good, and wise, that it is absolutely above emendation. In all instances he knows what is best to decree, and what is best to command, and what is best to do; and in all instances he decrees, he commands, and he conducts, as well as he knows how. An absolutely perfect, an infinitely glorious and amiable Being! It is true, he is accountable to none; and it is equally true, there is no need of it; for he is absolutely perfect. It is true, "he worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will;" and it is equally true, that the counsel of his own will is absolutely perfect. "He doth according to his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" But then, "He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." It is true, "he is the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, and who dwelleth in that high and holy place," infinitely exalted above the noblest of his creatures; yet at the same time, "he dwells with the humble and contrite, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the spirit of the contrite ones." It is true, he has the care of kingdoms

and countries, armies and fleets; yea, all the grand affairs of the universe lie upon his hands; for "his kingdom ruleth over all:" however, he is as mindful of the widow and the fatherless children, who trust in him, and takes as good care of all their concerns, as though he had nothing else to do; for "the very hairs of their head are all numbered." But if we begin to speak in his praise, we know not where to stop; for there is no end to the excellences of his character. And it is righteousness, it is the perfect moral rectitude of his nature, that thus exalts him, and renders him worthy of so much honor and praise.

And it is this which renders the angels, the inhabitants of heaven, such glorious beings. They are like their sovereign King; holy, as he is holy. Their hearts are right, they feel as they ought to feel. They view all beings and things, so far as their finite capacities will admit, as they are, and are affected and act accordingly. They view the Deity as the sum of being, of perfection, and of all good; as their Creator, and rightful Lord and Sovereign; and consider one another as fellow-creatures and fellow-subjects; and they feel and act accordingly. And to rejoice in God's exaltation, to exult in his absolute supremacy and universal dominion, to be charmed with the beauties of his character and the perfection of his conduct, to be entirely dependent on him and absolutely devoted to him, perfectly united together in sentiments and in the most cordial love, render them glorious angels and happy associates. Righteousness, or moral rectitude, is their beauty and glory, and what renders them such a noble and blessed community, under the government of Him who is absolutely perfect in the highest possible degree. — And this is heaven.

And thus righteousness exalts that holy community above. God possesses the throne, not merely as being Creator and Lord of all things, but on the foot of proper merit and worthiness. He is worthy on account of his superior character; he is infinitely worthy on account of his infinitely superior character to take the throne, and reign over all forever and ever; "for his name alone is excellent, and his glory is exalted above the heavens." And the angelic hosts, while they stand before him, full of humility and reverence, of love to him, of harmony among themselves, all ready to do his will, are worthy to be approved, and loved, and honored by their glorious Sovereign.

From heaven, the world of righteousness look down to hell, the world of sin and wickedness, of discord and confusion, of pride, malice, envy, and all the furious passions, and view them in contrast, and well consider their different states; and behold,

thus righteousness exalteth the one, and thus sin sinks down the other.

And if righteousness is of so honorable a nature, as thus to exalt even God himself, no wonder the wise man should say, "righteousness exalteth a nation." If it is the very glory of the Divinity, if it is the beauty of angels, if it is this chiefly which renders heaven so much better than hell, no wonder Solomon should think it would render kingdoms, countries, and nations on earth honorable and glorious, should it once prevail among them.

Let us stop here, a few minutes, and think what the consequences would be, should righteousness, which is the glory of the Deity, and the very beauty of heaven, should that holy and divine temper, which reigns there in perfection, descend on crowned heads, and fill the courts of princes, and spread down through every rank, even down to the meanest cottager, and to the poorest beggar; what would the consequences be? — Heaven would soon begin on earth.

Princes, even the most haughty monarchs of the earth, who, to gratify their pride and ambition, do often now, in the present state of things, summon mighty armies, spread war, devastation, and ruin, through whole countries, would be at once turned into other men, "be converted, and become as little children," as harmless as doves, as meek as lambs. Such would be their humility, their self-abhorrence, their penitence, their reverence towards the Deity, and love to the human kind, that they would speedily, and with the utmost sincerity, begin to concert measures for a universal, perpetual peace. Ambassadors for that end would be sent from, and to, every monarch, prince, and court; and orders be soon despatched to fleets and armies to stop the effusion of human blood. The thundering cannons would cease to roar; peace, universal peace, be soon proclaimed; for every monarch, from the heart, would soon begin to say to each other, "Take your right, my brother, and let me have mine, and let us live in love and peace, and seek the true happiness of our subjects, and no longer go on sacrificing thousands of precious lives in quarrels which honest men might settle with the utmost ease." And so now the "nations would beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, neither would they learn war any more."

And should righteousness, should all right affections, should supreme love to God and Jesus Christ, love to our holy religion, brotherly love, meekness, gentleness, fidelity, temperance, chastity, and all the Christian graces, not only take possession of the hearts of kings, but spread through all their royal families,

among their privy counsellors, through their parliaments, and to all their courts of justice, and should the sacred flame fly from city to city, from town to town, through all their dominions, and into all their distant colonies, into what a glorious and happy state would things be immediately brought! Look round upon all ranks and orders of men, and behold the glorious change.

Go to the clergy, and view them in their studies, or in their pulpits: behold, they are clothed with righteousness; they are inflamed with every holy, pious, benevolent, heavenly affection; they love their Master, they love their people, they love their work; they "delight in the law of the Lord, and in his law do they meditate day and night." They are like trees planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf never falls, and which brings forth fruit in their season; and out of their "treasure," from time to time, they "bring forth things new and old;" while their public prayers and their sermons are animated with the humblest, purest, warmest devotion. And, O, behold, how they love one another! Look through a province; they are united in the same faith, and love and live as brethren. Yea, look through a kingdom, yea, look from kingdom to kingdom; there are no sects, no parties, no divisions. They all, ministers and people, make up one great family, united in faith and love; united in one and the same belief, and in the most cordial affection to one another. And ministers of choice give themselves wholly to their work; and their people, from their own inclination, unite as one to give them an honorable support, not as their burden, but as their delight; they even take pleasure in it.

Go to the merchant's shop, and you will find not only just weights and just measures, but also piety towards God and love to the human kind, diligence and industry, prudence in their calling, frugality in their expenses, generosity to the poor, charmingly mingled in their characters. And, while wealth flows in upon them from every quarter, they are clothed with humility; and they, their children, and all they have, bear this inscription, in great capitals, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

Go to the house, the happy house of the industrious farmer. In early morning he and all his arise, and assemble to worship the Great Eternal. Devoutly they read God's holy word, and offer up prayer and praises, in the name of Jesus Christ, with penitent, humble, and grateful hearts. With alacrity and joy they go forth to their labors, and enjoy the delights of heaven in their fields; love and harmony reign within doors; the parents happy in God, in one another, and in their offspring;

while their children grow up in piety towards God, reverence towards their parents, and in the most cordial affection to one another. And hearken, and hear the wise maxims of the household where righteousness reigns. "Let us be industrious and frugal, that we may be able to render to all men their dues; tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom; yea, let us be industrious and frugal, that we may have wherewith to give to the poor, and to make the widow's heart sing for joy. And let all we have be consecrated to God; and while we live upon his bounty, let us live to his glory, and prepare for his heavenly kingdom."

Go into neighborhoods. Malice and envy are gone; tattling and backbiting are no more heard. Love, undissembled love, and good will, reign.

Go to courts of justice, and behold, they are unfrequented: for the people are become righteous, and live in love. And while they do as they would be done by, there seldom happens any affair that needs to be disputed at the bar.

Go to the house of the governor, who, as he was advanced to his high station merely on account of his merit, so he is the wisest man in the province, and a father to all his subjects. Every morning and evening he makes King Solomon's prayer for a wise and understanding heart; for it is his great concern to fill his station well. He is loved, revered, and obeyed by all his people, who live under him as one united, happy family, conscientiously concerned, by their good behavior, to render his government as easy and happy to him as possible. All the influence his high station, superior wisdom, and goodness give him over their hearts, is wholly consecrated to make them a still holier and happier people. For he feels towards them all the good will and tenderness which are wont to reside in the heart of a nursing father or nursing mother towards an infant child.

Go to the taverns, and even they are houses of piety and good order. No rioting or drunkenness, no chambering or wantonness to be found there; no town dwellers assembled for drinking and debauchery. No — for there are no such people to be found in towns where righteousness universally prevails. At these houses the stranger and the traveller may call, refresh themselves in quiet, or take lodging in peace, and in the morning go their ways, rejoicing to see good order and religion reign every where.

Go to the cottages of the poor, if you can find them, for their number will be but small in such a state of things. None rendered poor by a course of excessive drinking, or by gay dressing,

or by high living, or by idleness, or by any dishonest practices. A few, perhaps, you may find rendered poor through some natural infirmity of body or mind, or by some adversity which it was not in their power to foresee and prevent. And these are as humble as they are poor. They quietly submit to Providence, they are thankful for the little they have, they are industrious and prudent according to their abilities; and instead of envying their neighbors, they rejoice in their prosperity. They are beloved by every one; and their neighbors feel a peculiar pleasure in granting them relief from time to time; so that, in the midst of their poverty, they are really happy, and want none of the necessaries of life, and enjoy many of its conveniences.

Go to the schools of the prophets, to the seminaries of learning, and see a little picture of heaven. The whole society in perfect love and harmony, making swift advances in all knowledge, divine and human, growing up in love to God and to the human kind, and ripening for public service, under the indefatigable labors of their wise and learned instructors, whom they love and honor as dutiful children do their parents.

Meanwhile peace and plenty, universal love and harmony, reign from town to town, through all the province, through all the kingdom, yea, through all the kingdoms of the earth, where righteousness thus prevails. And heaven looks down propitious, and declares, "Blessed shalt thou be in thy basket and in thy store, blessed shalt thou be in the house and in the field."

Nor let any think this a description of a fictitious state of things; rather let every one know, that all this, and more than all this, shall be accomplished, when once that petition, so often put up by the true followers of Jesus, by his special direction, — "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," — is answered, and his holy religion comes to take place among mankind, when once "the stone cut out without hands becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth." Nor will what is written fail of an accomplishment in its season; for there has already "come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch has grown out of his roots," and he has taken "the throne of his father David," that he may reign over "every nation, language, and tongue," and the kingdom, and the "greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is to be given to him. At present, for wise and holy ends, Satan is suffered "to deceive the nations;" but the day draws nigh when he is to be "bound a thousand years;" and then "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling

together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." And thus righteousness tends to exalt a nation, and to render all the inhabitants of the earth happy. O, how glorious is the religion of Jesus Christ! When shall the day come, that it shall effectually take place in the hearts of mankind?

III. But, on the other hand, "sin is a reproach to any people." — It is a reproach itself, and in its effects and consequences naturally sinks a people into contempt, and brings down the judgments of Heaven upon them.

When civil rulers have no fear of God before their eyes, or regard to the public weal, and act an arbitrary and tyrannical part; — when subjects despise the Deity and contemn all authority, are full of discontentment and murmuring, divided into angry parties, ready to take fire on every occasion; — when ministers of the gospel are unstudious and ignorant, or preach error and practise wickedness, neither caring for the honor of Christ, nor the salvation of immortal souls, but devoted wholly to their ease, or to their worldly interest, or to support error and encourage wickedness; — when people live without God in the world, secure in sin, stupid to their eternal interest, hate the gospel, grudge ministers all they have, envy the rich, despise the poor, and perpetual discord reigns in town and churches; — when neighbors live in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another, their conversation tainted with ill-nature, and their traffic full of deceit and fraud; or if they are fair to the face, revile behind the back, and no man's word or promise to be trusted; — when people spend their time in idleness, their substance at taverns, in gay dressing, in high living, in lawsuits, until poverty comes like an armed man; — when peace and harmony are clean gone, and jarring, angry passions reign, no godliness, no humanity, Sabbaths profaned, family prayer neglected, hearts and hands unclean, whoredom rampant, no government, civil, ecclesiastical, or domestic, all riot and confusion, — how contemptible is such a community! how miserable is such a people! The higher these and such like distempers rise, the greater is their wretchedness. And if they do but begin to creep in among a people, they bring reproach and misery along with them; for, as virtue and happiness, so vice and misery, are naturally connected together. As "wis-

dom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths peace," so "to the wicked there is no peace; but they are like the troubled sea, whose waves cast up mire and dirt."

Besides, it may be expected, although the full vials of divine wrath are reserved for the world to come, that yet God in righteous judgment will sometimes in anger look down on such a nation, and spread a curse over all their blessings, so as to render them "cursed in their basket and in their store, in the house and in the field, and in all they put their hand unto."

And thus we see what is meant by righteousness, and how righteousness exalts a nation, and how sin is a reproach to any people: and so we are prepared, —

IV. To consider, that the only way for us in this colony to be a happy community, is to be a righteous people. And here let the following particulars be attended to: That we in this colony are under great external advantages to be a happy people — that notwithstanding our external advantages, our own vices may render us very miserable. But, if our external advantages were improved as a virtuous people might improve them, we might be very happy. And it is the duty of all, especially of those in places of public trust, to do all in their power to promote a universal reformation.

1. We in this colony are under great external advantages to be a happy people. We sit under the shadow of our mother country, and are protected by the fleets and armies of one of the best of kings. Canada, which has been a scourge to us for many years, is at present in the hands of his British majesty, our gracious sovereign, our indulgent father. Louisbourg is demolished; Crown Point is our own; Oswego, Niagara, and Pittsburg, are in our hands. Our sea-coasts are in no fear of an invading fleet, our frontiers are secure from the ravages of popish and pagan cruelty, our alarms are at an end, and we dwell quietly, each one secure under his own vine and under his own fig-tree. And we dwell in a good land, in a fertile country, where we may eat bread to the full; and no greater degree of industry is necessary in general than is really for the happiness of a community. Might we live in idleness, and yet enjoy a fulness of all things, we should not be happier, but rather a more miserable people; as idleness, in the present state of mankind, is naturally productive of many vices, which bring greater misery along with them into a community, than attends a life of honest labor. In a word, we live in so good a land, and enjoy such advantages for navigation, that were we virtuous and wise, were we prudent and industrious, we might have

enough of all the good things of this world, and be in debt to no other province or people upon the face of the earth.

And as to civil privileges, no community under heaven enjoys greater than we do. Nor is it easy to conceive what greater civil privileges can be enjoyed than we enjoy. Once every year, we may unite as brethren, and choose out our wisest and ablest men, to make our laws, to guide our public affairs, and provide for the decision of all our civil controversies. And all our towns are so many corporations, invested with power to take care of their own public concerns, and suppress idleness and debauchery, and every kind of immorality. And even every little parish has, so far as it needs for its own well-being, as part of the whole, full power and authority to manage and order its own affairs. Meanwhile each family is a distinct kingdom of its own, and for the defence of its rights and properties stands entitled to the wisdom and strength of the whole community.

And as to our religious privileges, every man has the Bible in his own hands, and is at liberty to read, and think, and judge for himself. Every man, as he is at the day of judgment to stand or fall for himself, so is now at liberty to worship God in that way which he verily thinks will be at last approved of by his Judge. Every parish is an ecclesiastical society, invested with full power to choose their own minister and provide for his support; and every particular church is at liberty to come into what connections they judge most for their own edification. Were any particular parish and church disposed to be Independents, they might be so; or if they choose to form themselves on the Presbyterian plan, they have their liberty; or if they desire to declare for the Church of England, there is none to hinder them; or if they choose to be in connection with neighboring churches, agreeable to the ecclesiastical constitution of this government, the door is open, and they are welcome to all the privileges of such a connection, only submitting to the orders, and performing the duties, which are necessarily implied in the very nature of the connection itself. And every parish, whether connected or unconnected is still an ecclesiastical society, and possessed of all the privileges which our laws give to all ecclesiastical laws in common. And had we now but a wise and understanding heart to discern the good and right way, and could we all, to a man, agree in our religious sentiments, we might, as one family, live together in perfect love and harmony, as brethren in Christ Jesus, and grow up into a meetness to live together forever in the world of love

and harmony above. Or if we differ in some lesser matters, which all sides agree not to be essential, we still may be happy, if we can only do as we would be done by; let others peaceably and quietly enjoy that liberty which we should be glad to enjoy in like circumstances. And if we differ in important points, with the Bible in our hands, he who is found to be in an error, will, at the last day, stand inexcusable before his Judge, speechless, and self-condemned.

Such are our civil and religious privileges. Meanwhile, we have a seminary of learning in the heart of our colony, designed for the training up a sufficient number of youth for public business; that when our rulers and teachers, now on the stage, are dead and gone, others may be prepared to take their places, and do worthily in their day and generation. And such are our external advantages to be a happy people.

2. But, notwithstanding all our external advantages to be a happy people, our own vices may render us very miserable; and, instead of appearing honorable in the eyes of our neighbors, we may sink down into contempt and ruin. For notwithstanding the goodness of our land, and all our advantages for navigation, yet luxury, idleness, debauchery, dishonesty, and multiplied lawsuits, may bring us to poverty. And if idleness and extravagant high living should so increase among us, that all we have to export out of the government should yearly fall many thousands in value below the goods imported, our farmers may soon be obliged to resign their lands to pay their debts. And if so many estates shall be found to be insolvent, that our wealthiest merchants could scarce escape breaking; and if our lands must be made over to gentlemen in other provinces, and we become their tenants, and have nothing to leave to our children but poverty and slavery, what a contemptible appearance shall we make in the eyes of our neighbors! "A wise man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself; but the fool goeth on and is punished."

And all our civil and religious liberties and privileges, if we divide into sects and parties, and grow angry, and if we abuse our liberties to the purposes of strife and contention, to bite, and devour, and oppress, may cease to administer to our comfort in this world, and only serve to render us so much the more inexcusable and miserable in the world to come. And our college, if not well instructed and governed, instead of being a nursery of learning and piety, may become a seminary of error and wickedness, and serve but to infect all our land. And while our idleness, our extravagances, our parties, our errors, and our wickedness in general, all join to render us a

miserable people, they will at the same time naturally prepare us for, and bring down, the judgments of God upon us. And it may come to pass, when our iniquities are full, and we ripe for destruction, that the cup of trembling, which has been put into the hands of our sister Canada, may be given us to drink. Our sister Canada, I say; for Canada, with all her wickedness, is as much our sister, as Sodom of old was the sister of Judah, who were by profession God's peculiar people. And God greatly resented it, that the Jews, in their prosperity, took no notice of the remarkable vengeance which he had executed on Sodom, their sister. And this is brought in, among the rest of their crimes, in the time of their visitation, when they were captives in Babylon, to justify the divine severity towards them. (Ezek. xvi. 56.) "For thy sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy mouth in the day of thy pride." And yet, proud as they were of their own goodness, God looked on the Jews more wicked than the Sodomites, (ver. 48.) "As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters." For when a people who are lifted up to heaven with privileges, yet go on impenitent in their sins, they are in the eyes of God more guilty than the worst of the heathen. Therefore it was that our Savior denounced such heavy woes against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, because they repented not. "It shall be more tolerable," says he, "for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for you." And thus, with all our glorious privileges, if we go on impenitent in our sins, we shall be miserable while we live, and it will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Canada than for us. But on the other hand, —

3. Should God now, of his infinite mercy through Jesus Christ, after all our aggravated provocations, give us eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand; and should we all, high and low, rich and poor, old and young, be brought each one to know the plague of his own heart; and not cover, but confess our sins; repent and return to God through Jesus Christ, and become Christians indeed, how soon should we be healed! God would become our friend, and we friends to one another. We should have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, and we all should become brethren, united together in the most cordial love, and then there would be an end to all our divisions. Meanwhile, pride and a luxurious disposition being mortified, those expensive and extravagant ways of living, to which our pride and luxuriousness now prompt us, would be looked upon with abhorrence, and laid

aside with shame and regret, as infinitely unbecoming a people professing godliness. And idleness would begin to appear to us as it did to St. Paul, a scandalous crime. We should look upon an idle Christian as a disorderly walker, and in obedience to the apostle's command, withdraw ourselves from such. (2 Thess. iii. 6—14.) And not to provide for our own households, would be esteemed a practical apostasy from Christianity, a denying of the faith, and being worse than infidels. (1 Tim. v. 8.) The noise of riot would be no more heard in our land. Taverns would be empty; industry would take place; prudence, frugality, honesty, and all the social virtues. In consequence of which our debts would soon be paid; the farmer, the tradesman, the merchant, get out of their embarrassed circumstances, and all things begin to put on another face. And now we should possess a disposition to make a right improvement of all our external advantages to be a happy people; and, if all our external advantages were improved, as a virtuous people might improve them, we might be very happy.

If Solomon's character of a virtuous woman (Prov. xxxi.) should become the common character of our women, and St. Paul's sentiments of industry should be practically espoused by our men, we should soon have a fulness of all things. And if humility and love, love to God and to mankind, if this, which is indeed the true Christian temper, should take full possession of all orders and ranks of men, there would soon be an end to all our parties, and to all our contentions. For, "from whence come wars and fightings among you?" says the apostle. "Come they not hence even of your lusts, that war in your members?" If your lusts therefore were mortified, there would be an end to all wars and contentions. And if love to God and to mankind took full possession of our souls, we should of course feel and live as brethren, in the most cordial friendship.

And now, we should naturally unite in choosing those to rule over us, who are our wisest and ablest men; and they would naturally be affected toward the community as a father toward his children; and we should love and reverence them as our fathers; our ministers would all be united in the same faith; our churches would walk together in love; and peace and love would reign through all our towns; and no people under heaven would be happier than we.

4. And let me add, it is the duty of all, especially of those in places of public trusts, to do all in their power to promote a universal reformation.

It is the duty of each and every one of us to be religious ourselves, to repent and be converted, to give up ourselves to

God through Jesus Christ, and live in the daily exercise of every divine virtue and Christian grace, and in the practice of all social duties as the servants of God. This is our duty previous to a consideration of our temporal interest. For God is worthy of supreme love and universal obedience, as he is by nature God. And he has an original entire right to us, as he is our Creator. And if we bring the work of our redemption into the account, and the eternal rewards of heaven, we are bound, we are under infinite obligations, not only in duty, but in gratitude and interest, to love God and live to him, and do all we can to promote his honor, and the interests of his Son's kingdom in the world; and all this previous to any earthly consideration; yea, all this, although we were so circumstanced, as that we might lose our lives for the profession and practice of Christianity. But when to all this we add, that we in this colony are in fact in such circumstances, that it would be every way for our present interest to become strictly religious, that it is the readiest and directest way to become a happy people, yea, the only sure and certain way, this still further obliges us. And to go on in our sins, under these circumstances, is not only to despise God and the Redeemer, and the eternal joys of heaven, but to be even stupid to our own present interest and happiness in this world. Besides, those who are in public trust, are not only under all these obligations to be religious themselves; but they are also under peculiar obligations to do all they can to promote a universal reformation in others. And suffer me here to state and urge these obligations in an address to our rulers and teachers.

First. To our rulers. May it please your honors, and you, gentlemen Representatives, to you it belongs to lead the way, and it is your indispensable duty to do all that lies in your power, in your several places and capacities, to bring about a universal reformation among us, and to make us a happy people. You owe this duty to God, who has in the course of his providence done you this honor, to constitute you our rulers. He is the Father of your spirits, he formed your minds, he qualified you for government, and has distinguished you from your brethren and neighbors, and raised you up to rule over us. He has committed this people to your care, and made them your children, and he has given you wisdom, and put the sword in your hands, and you are sworn to be faithful; and God is your witness, and will be your judge at that day, when, divested of your present offices, you appear before the bar of Christ to receive your final sentence, in the presence of the assembled universe. And if you are unfaithful, you never can

answer it to the Almighty; but will stand at his bar as self-condemned, as you have sometimes seen guilty criminals stand at yours.

His Honor the Governor, by and with your advice and desire, has lately sent his majesty's proclamation through the colony, and ordered it to be read twice every year in all our congregations. It may, therefore, be considered as your joint act. And therein you "earnestly and strictly require all persons within this government, of every character, rank, and degree, to exert themselves in the practice and encouragement of piety and virtue, in preventing and punishing vice, profaneness, and immorality. And you command and enjoin judges, justices, and other magistrates, and all informing officers, that they be vigilant and strict in causing the laws for promoting religion, virtue, and good manners, to be duly observed, and in the discovery, prosecution, and punishment of all persons who shall be guilty of the breach of the laws made for preventing and punishing profane, vicious, dissolute, and immoral practices. And you exhort all his majesty's good subjects in this colony to contribute all in their power, both by example and influence, toward a general reformation of manners, seriously considering their indispensable duty therein, and the awful consequences of a neglect thereof." And now, gentlemen, you may remember the words of the Lord to his people of old: "They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a heart in them!" It is easier, you are sensible, to issue out such a proclamation, than it is to act up to the true purport and spirit of it. "Dismal is the remark," says a late writer in England, "that no country has more or better laws to curb these vices than we have, but yet no country is so corrupted with drunkenness and idleness as England is at present, consuming all orders of people." And he adds, "One can scarce number all the excellent laws, made from Queen Elizabeth's time to this hour, against drunkenness, swearing, idle and dissolute persons, and all vice in general; but such is the gross neglect of them, as if they had not been enacted." Thus far this writer.* O, never let it be said of us, according to the ancient proverb mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel, "As is the mother so is the daughter." Remember, gentlemen, the words of the Lord to good old Eli, who, when he heard of the wickedness of his sons, did something equivalent to the issuing out of a proclamation to put laws in execution, without an actual reducing the proclamation into practice. He called them to an account, and

* See London Magazine for 1760, p. 423.

said unto them, "Why do ye these things? For I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear." But was this enough in the eyes of God? No. Hear what God says: "I will judge the house of Eli forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." And, gentlemen, is not all the power in the colony virtually in your hands? Have you not as much power to restrain immoralities in any of us, as Eli had to restrain his sons? Have not we chosen you to be our fathers, and called ourselves your children, and put ourselves voluntarily under your authority? And if you should take your sword in hand, and go thoroughly to work to suppress drunkenness, idleness, and all kinds of debauchery, heaven and earth will be on your side. None but the vilest of the people will raise a clamor. And shall their clamor intimidate you? God forbid! Wherefore, as the people said to Joshua, when about to extirpate the wicked Canaanites, "Only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage." So I say unto you, in the behalf of all sober, well-minded people in Connecticut, "Gentlemen, the Lord be with you in your attempts to suppress vice and immorality. And let that man be severely punished that shall dare to resist you. Only be strong and of a good courage." And pray, gentlemen, as you have leisure at this interview, take opportunity to strengthen one another in this good work. Agree and combine together to carry his majesty's proclamation into execution. The sword is put into your hands for this very purpose. God commands you to be faithful. Your king calls upon you. Your oath obliges you. God will be with you, and all good men will stand by you. And if you are indeed faithful in the sight of God in this, and in all your other duties, you will have the approbation of your own minds, living and dying, and the eternal rewards of heaven in the world to come. Which may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Christ!

Second, To the ministers of the gospel here present. Reverend fathers and brethren, when our rulers are making efforts to bring about a general reformation, how ought we to be affected, and what ought to be our conduct? Should not we be ready to look up to Heaven, and devoutly say, "Blessed be the Almighty, who hath raised us up such a king, and hath put this thing into the hearts of our rulers; and now may the Lord confirm the heart of our king and of our rulers in this good

work"? And in the mean time our whole conduct should declare to our rulers and to the world, that we are with them in this thing. His Honor, our Governor, in his proclamation, has recommended it to us "to inculcate upon our hearers the importance of this great and good work, and to assist, by our public ministry and private counsel and advice, in promoting the same." And now, what shall we say to our great Master at the day of judgment, if we should be cold and indifferent upon such an occasion as this, and when thus called upon? Our Savior was zealous against all manner of wickedness at the risk of his life. His apostles and first ministers were of the same spirit; and in the midst of mighty opposition, went every where, preaching, that men should repent and turn to God. And shall we be lukewarm with these examples before us; and that when we have so many things to animate us from heaven and earth? God forbid. Wherefore let us, upon this occasion, afresh devote ourselves wholly to the work of the ministry, and be agreed and united to do our utmost to bring about a universal reformation.

And behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! And if we should all cordially unite in preaching up the true gospel of Jesus Christ, and in bearing testimony against error and wickedness of every kind; and if we should all be thoroughly engaged to maintain the discipline of Christ in his house, and to prevent the unqualified from entering into the work of the ministry, and to strengthen the hands of our civil authority in suppressing vice; if rulers and teachers, throughout the colony, should be united as one man to bring about a universal reformation, might we not hope for the divine blessing, and expect to see true religion yet prevail in our land? a land originally settled for religious purposes; a land under many singular obligations to be holy to the Lord. May God Almighty give us such a heart, of his infinite mercy through Jesus Christ.

To conclude, with one word to the congregation in general: From all that has been said, the true source of all our woes in this colony may easily be discerned, and the only way for a cure — "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

And if we look back to the beginning of the world, the experience of all past ages serves to confirm us in these sentiments. How happy was man at first, when sin was a thing unknown! And had mankind remained in their primitive state of innocence and rectitude, in love to God and one another, misery had been forever unknown, and this had been a happy world, near akin

to heaven. Sin is the source of all that misery and ruin which has spread through this apostate race, It turned our first parents out of paradise, and subjected them and all their race to death. It brought down a flood on the old world, and fire and brimstone on Sodom, and all the plagues on Egypt. It caused the carcasses of six hundred thousand Israelites to fall in the wilderness, and was the source of all the judgments which came on God's peculiar people in the days of their judges and of their kings. It laid a foundation for their Babylonish captivity, and afterwards for their destruction by the Romans. Meanwhile, it has spread misery and ruin among all other nations upon the face of the whole earth, from age to age. And this dreadful monster, this first-born of Satan, this universal destroyer, which we call Sin, has entered into this colony; nay, has entered into our hearts, and is the source of all our calamities, civil, ecclesiastical, and domestic. And shall we hug the viper in our bosoms, and caress the source of all our woes? God forbid. Rather, having found out the hateful monster, let us with a holy indignation bring it out before the Lord, and treat it as Samuel did Agag. This is the Achan, this is the troubler of our Israel; wherefore by a universal agreement let it be doomed to death. And while our rulers and our teachers arm themselves against it, let every man in the colony join to stone it with stones, till it is dead — so let Sin be slain. Pride, luxuriousness, contentiousness, malice, envy, idleness, dishonesty, or by whatever other name it is called, it is sin, and let it die; and let righteousness come and reign in its stead. And then shall we become a glorious and happy people, and our shame shall be wiped away. O, who shall deliver us from this odious, dreadful monster? Behold, the great Messiah is appointed to bruise the serpent's head, and is now exalted at his Father's right hand, to give repentance and remission of sins. Therefore in his name let us look up to God, and cry mightily for deliverance. And may Heaven hear our cry, and send us help, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. AMEN.

A LETTER TO SCRIPTURISTA.

SIR:

FROM the first settling of New England, it has been the constant practice of all our Congregational churches to require a public assent to the chief articles of the Christian faith, as a term of communion in special ordinances. Nor is there, to this day, one such church, or, to be sure, not above one, that ever I heard of, but what insists upon such a public assent, as that without which they will not admit any to sealing ordinances. Our churches have formulas, which they call the doctrines of faith, or the articles of the Christian faith. The minister publicly reads them to such as are to be taken into full communion; and they give their assent to them before all the congregation. For our churches believe, and act upon it, that none ought to be admitted to full communion, but such as are sound in the faith; and that the church has a right to judge of their soundness in the faith; and they do judge those to be sound in the faith, who publicly profess, acting, to a judgment of charity, understandingly and honestly, their assent to the articles of the Christian faith, which they have agreed to, and drawn up to be used in the admission of members; as they are persuaded said articles do express the true sense of the Holy Scriptures.

Were they convinced, that any of their articles were contrary to Scripture, I know not of one, or, to be sure, not above one, of all our churches, but would immediately alter their articles. For we all profess, that the Bible is the only standard by which our religious sentiments are to be formed; and we mean, by our creeds and confessions, only to express our sense of Scripture; not to make a new Bible, but only to express how we understand the Bible that God has already made; and this, to the end that others may know our principles, and we know theirs.

When, therefore, a number of ministers, and of private gentlemen, who belong to our churches, have in late years appeared so very zealous against creeds and confessions, as tests of orthodoxy, I was at a loss to know what they meant, and what they designed, and what alteration they would have in our customs

and practices, if they could new model things just to their minds. Would they have men admitted into the church, and appointed public instructors, without any regard to their religious principles? Or do they not like it, that our articles should be writ down? Or would they have new creeds drawn up, contrary to our present, and imposed on our churches, and our churches not allowed to judge for themselves? Or what do they mean? And what would they have?

Thus stood the case in my view, when, two or three years ago, hearing that something new was about to be published against creeds and confessions, by a certain ingenious gentleman, I sent the following lines to the printer of the Connecticut Gazette, which he was so good as to give place in his paper, No. 149.

"To the Printer, etc.:

"As several pieces of late have been published against creeds and confessions of human composure being used as tests of orthodoxy, which are thought not fully to reach the merits of the cause, it is desired, that in the next piece of that nature the following questions may be answered.

"*Question I.* Is it of any importance what men's principles be, if their lives are but good? For if it is not, then not their religious principles, but only their external conduct, need be inquired into; and they may be admitted to sealing ordinances in the church of Christ, or be licensed to preach, and ordained to the work of the ministry, or be employed as presidents, fellows, and tutors, to take care of the education of our youth, whether they are orthodox or not; and so there will be no need of any tests of orthodoxy, human or divine.

"But if it be of importance that they should be sound in the faith, and if their religious principles must be inquired into, then it is inquired,—

"*Quest. II.* Whether particular Christian communities, as well as particular persons, have not a right to judge for themselves, what is the true sense of Scripture, and what principles are necessary, according to the Holy Scriptures, to be believed and professed, in order to an admission to sealing ordinances, or to be employed as public instructors.

"For if particular communities have not a right to judge for themselves, they ought no longer to claim it. But if they may not judge for themselves, who shall judge for them? Shall all the various sects among Protestants go back to the pope to be set right? But, if it be granted that particular communities have a right to judge for themselves, it is inquired, —

"*Quest. III.* Why they may not manifest what is their sense of Scripture, in writing, as well as by word of mouth; that is, why they may not compose a written confession of faith to be used as a test of orthodoxy.*

"Till a good answer to these questions can be given, it is not to be expected that the use of creeds and confessions should be laid aside. And they are proposed to the public, with a desire they may be answered with that seriousness and good nature with which all religious controversies ought to be managed. And such an answer shall be attended to with an honest desire to know the truth, by PAULINUS.

"*December* 24, 1757."

And now, after above two years, to consider of the matter, you, my good friend Scripturista, have been so kind as to give a public answer to my three questions. For which, although you have misunderstood me in a very material point, I return you my public thanks. And if you speak not only your own sense, but the sense of your whole party, I humbly conceive we are not so far apart in this particular controversy, but that it may pretty easily be settled to the satisfaction of all concerned; for if I understand you right, you have granted the whole I designed; and disputed against a point which no denomination of Christians ever maintained; be sure, none in New England.

I. You not only grant, but contend earnestly for what we all lay down as our first principle and fundamental maxim, namely, that not creeds, nor confessions, but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are the only rule of faith; by which we are, each one for ourselves, to be determined what to believe in matters of religion; and to which the final appeal is to be made by all denominations of Christians, and by which they ought to decide all their religious controversies. Our creeds are to express nothing but what we verily believe to be the true sense of Scripture. And if any think we mistake the true sense of Scripture, the dispute is to be decided, not by our creeds, but by the Scripture; comparing Scripture with Scripture. So saith our platform; and this we are fully agreed in. "The smallest grain of an inspired testimony," says Professor Dunlop, in his

* A test is that by which we try something, to discover what it is. The Bible is the test by which we try doctrines, to discover whether they be divine truths. A confession of faith is a test by which we try those who offer to be of our communion, to discover whether they are orthodox, that is, whether they believe those doctrines which we judge true, and necessary to be professed, in order to be admitted to communion, etc. In this latter sense only is it, that the Christian church ever maintained, that confessions of human composure might be used as texts of orthodoxy. See Professor Dunlop, on Creeds and Confessions.

piece on creeds and confessions, "is momentous enough, in a just balance, to weigh down a cartload of human canons and confessions." (Edit. 2, p. 78.)

II. You grant, "that some of the principles of religion are so important, that none ought to be admitted to sealing ordinances, or to be employed as public instructors, who do not profess to believe them;" yea, you grant, that if they do at first profess to believe them, yet if afterwards it appears they do not, "ministers ought to be silenced," and, by parity of reason, church members censured. You grant this, I say; and therefore, to silence and excommunicate such if they continue obstinate, provided it be done with a Christian temper, is so far from being persecution, that you look upon it a Christian duty, according to Tit. iii. 10.

And thus far you agree with the church of Christ in all ages of the world.

III. And you also grant fully, just as fully as I would have you, "that particular Christian communities, as well as particular persons, have a right, not had a right once, ten or twenty years ago, but every day of their lives—"have a right to judge for themselves what is the true sense of Scripture; and what principles are necessary, according to the Holy Scriptures, to be believed and professed, in order to an admission to sealing ordinances, or to be employed as public instructors."

And if they have a right to judge for themselves, you must grant, that it is their duty to exercise this right, and not remain in suspense; but come to a judgment; not to be ever learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth, like the condemned by the apostle, (2 Tim. iii. 7;) but rather to believe with all the heart, and to continue in the things which they have learned, and been assured of.

Yea, how can a Christian church admit any to communion, or settle a minister, until first they are agreed what principles are orthodox and necessary. If they put off coming to a judgment, and agree upon nothing as a rule for themselves to act by, in the admission of members, or settlement of a minister, "to be of any force till they are dead," then they must admit no members, and settle no ministers, till they get into the next world; or else must admit members and settle ministers on this maxim, "that it is no matter what men's principles be, if their lives are but good;" which still you will not allow. There is an absolute necessity, therefore, upon your own principles, that Christian communities settle these points, and agree what principles are necessary, even at their first formation.

And surely, a right to judge for themselves does by no means

imply, that they must never come to a judgment; never be grounded and settled in a firm belief of all the great and important doctrines of the gospel, but always be as unsteady children, tossed to and fro, and carried about, like leaves in autumn, with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: for this is expressly contrary to the word of God, (Col. i. 23. Eph. iv. 14,) and equally contrary to common sense. For a right to judge for ourselves is so far from being inconsistent with our coming to a judgment, that it can be of no use to us but as it is improved to this end.

But you say, "We must alter our belief, if afterwards we see just cause for it." True; and so we must give up the Bible itself, if we see just cause for it; and cease any longer to believe that two and two make four, if we see just cause for it. And what then? Must we therefore never come to a judgment about the plainest and most evident matters? Or do you think that the great truths of the gospel cannot be clearly determined from the Bible? I hope that believing the great doctrines of the gospel "with all the heart," with a "full assurance of faith," yea, with "all the riches of the full assurance of understanding," in the manner true Christians did in the apostolic age, (Acts viii. 37. Col. ii. 2. 1 Thess. i. 5. Heb. x. 22,) does not appear in your eyes like a groundless confidence, a faith built on no solid, rational, lasting evidence. I hope you would not have the minds of Christians always fluctuating and unsettled in their belief, like a wave of the sea, and so, in consequence hereof, they be unstable in all their ways, like those condemned in Jam. i. 6—8. Nor can I persuade myself, that you think, that a firm and persevering belief of Christianity is inconsistent with the impartiality of an honest man, who is a free inquirer after truth; and that there is no way to be a strong believer, but by being a great bigot. If, indeed, you are thus far gone into scepticism, and feel yourself thus at a total loss what to believe and what to disbelieve, I wonder not you should be for delaying to draw up a creed for yourself, lest you should soon alter your mind, and get into another scheme of religion, a scheme condemned by your former creed. But methinks, to put off "till after death," is too long, if you intend to be saved at last by Christianity. But if it is no matter what men's principles be, if their lives are but good, all is well; whether you ever get settled in your principles in this world, or in the world to come.

But why need I thus reason with you? For whatever sound some of your words may seem to have, and however some of

your readers may understand you, yet you cannot really mean that Christians, or Christian communities, should delay and put off their being settled, fully settled, in the belief of the great doctrines of the gospel. For you do expressly grant, that it is of so great importance that men be sound in the faith, that they must not be admitted to communion, or ordained to the work of the ministry, without it; which supposes that the great truths of the gospel are so plain and evident, that they may and ought to be known and believed; and Christian communities to be well settled in these things, even at their first foundation.

IV. You grant, "that particular Christian communities may manifest their sense of Scripture in writing, as well as by word of mouth," that is, they may compose creeds. For a creed (which comes from *credo*, to believe) consists of a number of articles, which I believe to be taught in the Holy Scriptures. And what particular use is to be made of their creed by Christian communities, you have already virtually granted. For, —

V. Although this clause, "A written confession of faith to be used as a test of orthodoxy," does really surprise you, taken in the frightful sense you have put upon it, yet, taken in the sense I designed the words, it seems you fully approve the thing. The name, "a test of orthodoxy," frights you, and no wonder, considering the frightful idea you put to the words; but the thing designed by that name seems quite familiar to your mind. For there are some religious principles which appear to you of so great importance, that you would neither admit to sealing ordinances, nor to the office of a public instructor, those who would not profess them; and these principles you fully believe are taught in the Holy Scriptures. So that, in the sense I use words, they are your creed, and your test of orthodoxy; for you believe them, and insist upon the profession of them as a term of communion. And possibly their evidence appears to you so clear and full, that you are persuaded you never shall, and in fact you never will, alter your belief as to them. And yet you are no bigot; but rather you profess to stand ready to alter your belief, "when you see just cause for it." However, till then you would join to silence, and excommunicate, a minister who should be proved guilty of gross heresy, according to your notions of heresy, that is, according to your creed, used as a test of orthodoxy.

Yea, it is plain you have no notion of any possible way for you to judge of your neighbor's belief, whether it be what you call orthodox or not, but by comparing it with your creed, that is, with what you believe to be the true sense of Scripture.

For, as you say, "having settled your principles according to your understanding of Scripture, you do necessarily judge of particular cases according to them, or agreeable to your own judgment of the true meaning of the Scriptures." Nor indeed, sir, has any body else any other way of judging; for there can be no other; and in fact, all parties, however they differ in their disputes, yet agree to a tittle in their conduct. They all have but one and the same way to judge of their neighbor's orthodoxy, namely, by comparing their neighbor's profession with what they themselves believe to be the true meaning of Scripture, that is, with their own creed. For we must judge by what we believe to be the true sense of Scripture, or not make the Scripture our rule of judgment, in any respect at all.*

So that it is plain, that all the great zeal, loud outcries, and hot disputes against creeds and confessions being used as a test of orthodoxy, must have arisen from some misunderstanding of the case; or else men have not been honest; but rather disputed against creeds in general, merely because they hate and want to get rid of the established creed of their country. Had it not been for this circumstance, they might have been as great friends to creeds and confessions as any of their neighbors. Now, which of these, my friend, is the case with you? Do you hate Calvinism? Do you dispute against creeds, because you disbelieve our confession of faith, and want to get rid of it? No, you say; the man is "guilty of scandal who imputes any such corrupt design to you." Very well, sir; it remains, therefore, that your dislike of creeds, as tests of orthodoxy, must be founded on some mistaken notion of the thing; which mistaken notion were it removed, all the dislike of so orthodox and so honest a man would immediately cease. And accordingly it is observable, that having in your letter granted the whole I designed, by my three questions, to lead gentlemen on your side to feel they must grant, or turn sceptics, on the one hand; or deprive particular Christian communities of their right to judge for themselves, and act according to their own consciences, on the other; I say, having granted the whole I designed, you

* The admirers of Dr. Taylor look upon those as orthodox, who understand the Scripture as he has explained it; for they esteem his writings, "as being a just exposition of the word of God in those doctrines or articles which are contained in them;" nor would they choose a man to instruct their children in divinity, who did not judge of truth and error, as Dr. Taylor does. And why should they condemn that in others which they approve of in themselves? Or why should they desire to misrepresent it to the world, when at the same time, rightly understood, they and all the world must agree to justify it? Let them confute, if they can, what we mean to maintain; or, if they know they cannot, let them own it, and not try to blacken, by misrepresentations, what they dare not but justify, rightly represented.

state a question absolutely of your own making, and set yourself to dispute against a point no denomination of Christians ever professed to maintain. To be sure, it appears to me so very absurd, that instead of its being espoused by almost all Christians since the reign of Constantine the Great, as you imagine, I very much doubt whether there ever was, in any age, so much as one man of tolerable sense that meant to hold it. You indeed insinuate that a certain gentleman maintains it; but I dare say you can no sooner get him to believe it, than you can to believe that the same thing may be, and not be, in the same sense, and at the same time. And it is not fair to put a meaning to a man's words he never intended.

VI. The question you dispute against is this: "whether particular Christian communities, having drawn up in writing a confession of faith, agreeable to their present judgment of the true sense of Scripture, have not just right and authority to IMPOSE it on themselves, and all their members, as a test of orthodoxy, and term of communion; and for the future use it as such." By the word "*impose*," you afterwards explain yourself to mean, "they oblige themselves to use it as a test of orthodoxy as long as they live; even although they are in fact afterwards convinced that it is not orthodox." Or, in other words, they bind themselves to believe, profess, and practise according to it, and not to alter in the least, although "they see just cause for" alteration.

Strange notion! Bind themselves not to alter their belief, although afterwards "they see just reason for it"! But if I do, in fact, see just reason to alter my belief, that is, what appears to me to be just reason, I cannot but alter my belief. It is not in my power to believe a doctrine to be taught in Scripture, while at the same time I am fully convinced it is not taught there; and no man living ever meant to oblige himself to this. Indeed, it would be to oblige himself to an absolute contradiction; to believe a thing to be, and not to be, in the same sense, and at the same time. For, as I before said, "a creed consists of a number of articles, which I believe are taught in the sacred Scriptures;" and therefore said articles are not my creed, if I do not believe that they are taught in Scripture. But to believe they are taught in Scripture, and to believe that they are not taught in Scripture, at the same time, is to believe a thing to be and not to be; which is what you must be sensible, on the least reflection, no man ever meant to do. If the church of Rome is vain enough to believe herself infallible, yet she never was so absurd as professedly to oblige herself to persevere in her belief of her own infallibility, although in time to come she should be fully convinced of her mistake.

"They may not alter their principles," you say, "or at least their profession afterwards, though on further inquiry they should think they had mistaken the sense of Scripture at first;" that is, they are obliged to proceed to silence a minister, or censure a private Christian, as a heretic, directly against the light of their own consciences, when they are fully persuaded they are sound in the faith, the error not being in them, but in their own creeds; to set which notion in all its horrors, you tell a long story of a church trial, carried on upon this scheme, and conclude with saying, "that if the church have a right to make a contrary judgment, if they see just reason for it," then tests of orthodoxy must be given up. So that this is the precise notion of tests of orthodoxy with which you are so terribly frighted, and against which you dispute so zealously, as having in all ages of the church been the grand source of all imposition, tyranny, and persecution, although at the same time it does not appear that this notion of a test of orthodoxy was ever embraced by any Christian church in the world.

Among all the reformed churches, none are more zealous for creeds and confessions, as tests of orthodoxy, than the church of Scotland, and Mr. Dunlop, professor of divinity in the university of Edinburgh, in his preface to their confession, who wrote to show the justice, reasonableness, and necessity of it, as a *public standard of orthodoxy*, may be supposed to speak the common sense of that church. But he expressly saith, "According to the principles of our confession, every man would search after the truth with the utmost impartiality; attend to the voice of divine revelation, though it may sound very differently in his ears from the public standard of any fallible church. It is base and inglorious for any person to dissemble the truth when he discovers it, or neglect any proper means of spreading it in the world, because he may thereby disoblige the majority and lose their favors." Again, "As good men will never subscribe a confession but when persuaded in their consciences of the conformity of its articles to divine revelation, so they will with courage oppose themselves to it when convinced of their error; they will not be afraid openly to abandon it, and will prove as zealous in promoting what they now see to be the mind of God in the Scripture, as if there had never been such a thing as a human creed in the world." Thus far this author, celebrated by all the friends of creeds and confessions, as one who has written genteelly and unanswerably. Read him, my good Scripturista, and answer him fairly, and we will all come over to your side, for we all maintain that we have a right to change our sentiments, "when we see just reason for it." But till

then, we ought to persevere in the truth, how much misrepresented soever it is; yea, although dressed up as absurd in itself, and the native source of almost all evil.

But since you are so orthodox and so honest a man, and apparently a man of sense, pray let me stand and wonder a little, and in my turn be "really surprised," how you ever came to think the Christian church in all ages meant to espouse tests of orthodoxy in the sense you have charged upon them. Can you produce any history to prove that this was the case in the primitive times, or in later ages? Does Eusebius say so, or the celebrated Du Pin? Does Sleiden, or Burnet, or Neal, or Bowers, or any other historian of credit? To be sure, so honest a man as you, would not charge so black and absurd an opinion upon the Christian church, in all ages, out of pure wilful malice, on purpose to bring an odium upon all the friends of creeds. And how a man of your good sense could possibly be guilty of so gross a mistake, is very hard to say. To attribute it to wilful malice, I cannot; to attribute it to your ignorance, I do not know how to do it. And on the whole, I am "really surprised." You don't pretend to quote but one author, and it is not only plain from his piece, but he expressly tells me by word of mouth, that he never meant any such thing: but if he did, how does this prove that the Christian church, in all ages, have been in this scheme? or what warrant had you to raise such an evil report against the church of Christ?

As to the questions you state, the answer is short. — "Who have right to make such tests of orthodoxy?" Nobody. — "What principles should be put into such tests?" None at all. — "And who should be bound by them?" None in this world, or in the next.

But you have said so much about imposition and persecution, that we must stop here a few minutes, lest ignorant people should be imposed on. You do not mean to charge your own scheme, my good friend, with being a persecuting scheme. Nor do you think it necessary that our churches should give up their right to judge for themselves, and become indifferent to all principles, as willing to receive an Arminian or Socinian to communion, as an orthodox Christian; and particularly declare that it is no matter what men's principles be, if their lives are but good; and so commence pagans,* in order to avoid the dreadful

* The pagans in the apostolic age exceedingly cried out against the Christian sect, for damning all parties but their own; that is, for preaching as their Master had bid them, "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) Nor were all the various tribes of heathen idolaters, with all their different gods, in full charity with one another; and so they all joined to look upon the Christian sect as unsocial and inimical to the human kind. See Warburton's Divine Legation.

guilt of imposition and persecution. Pray, my good Scripturista, do tell me who acts the manly, honest part, and who the part of an imposer and persecutor?

Aristocles was educated in a Socinian church at Siena. One article of their faith was, that "Jesus Christ is a mere creature, who never had any existence before he was born of the Virgin Mary." And they professed to understand all those texts of Scripture which speak of his divinity, to imply no more than that he was *God by office*. Aristocles, at the age of sixteen, joined in full communion with the church, and publicly gave his assent to their creed. At the age of twenty-four, the former minister being dead, Aristocles was chosen his successor, and put into possession of all their parsonage lands for life, on condition he should continue to preach the doctrines embraced by that particular church, which, not having studied the controversy, he inadvertently engaged to do, being by the influence of education full in the Socinian scheme. However, within two years after his ordination, having carefully searched the Scriptures, Aristocles was fully convinced of his error, and became a sound believer and a good man. And having counted the cost, he came to a full resolution, at the risk of all his outward comforts, honestly to inform his church and congregation of the change of his sentiments; and to preach up the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, and endeavor to set these points in the clearest light from the Holy Scriptures, and at the same time honestly to acknowledge to his people, that he had broken the covenant, which in the times of his ignorance he had made with them, and so forfeited all claim to the church's parsonage lands, which accordingly he resigned. "And now," says he, "if you will choose me for your minister, as I am, I am willing to serve you; but I claim no right to *impose* a Calvinist minister upon a Socinan church." — And pray, sir, did not this man act an honest part? *

Authades, in another part of the Christian world, where Calvinism was the only established religion, in his youth, joined

* "Did I therefore alter my notions as to articles of faith, which I had once subscribed, and came to perceive the falsehood of them, I would think myself obliged to follow the dictates of my own conscience, and would endeavor, also, by all due means, to persuade the church to which I belonged to change their faith also. But if I were not able, it would be extremely foolish to fancy that they would act directly contrary to their own principles, in continuing me their minister, and endowing me with that salary, which they had allotted to a pastor that should teach them doctrines which I had found myself obliged to abandon. It were absurd to imagine that though those who serve the altar should like the altar, that yet I should live by an altar which I had abandoned, and set up one in opposition to, and indeed endeavored to overthrow." — *Eells on Creeds*, p. 91.

with the church where he lived, and publicly gave his assent, according to custom, to the articles of the Christian faith, as contained in their formula, which were strictly Calvinistic, although the church was grown very lax in examinations, without which, formulas, though never so good, will not answer the end. He did not believe their articles at the time, but it was for his credit to be a church member; therefore he kept his infidelity to himself, and made a public profession. At length, the minister, a good old Calvinist, died. The church and congregation invited Authades to be his successor. All the time he was on probation, his chief study was to conceal himself; for by this time, he began to be full in the Socinian scheme. He generally preached on moral subjects, as these gave him the largest scope for popular declamation, and the best advantages to hide his principles. If at any time he preached on original sin, regeneration, justification, the satisfaction of Christ, or the influences of the Holy Spirit, as he was obliged sometimes to do, to prevent their suspicions, he took the greatest care to express himself so, as that his secret sentiments should not be discovered by the people. However, some of the more judicious sort suspected him, and feared he meant to act a part; nevertheless, a great majority invite him to settle, and he is ordained. He expressly covenants to preach to them according to their Calvinistic articles of faith, and on this condition, they engage to pay him a hundred pounds per annum. He knew they would not settle him, if he did not delude them. And he still knows he cannot keep possession of the hundred pounds per annum, unless he can keep them deluded. Therefore he uses all his art to conceal himself from the congregation in general; and in the mean time, is usually cunning to make proselytes to the Socinian scheme, in a secret, underhanded way. At length, having made a party, he begins to take courage; and slyly dresses up Calvinists as bigots, and vital piety as enthusiasm; and more openly declaims against creeds and confessions, as impositions and engines of persecution, the result of a proud and domineering spirit; and in a word, the fatal source of all mischief; for so they feel to him. For as he that doth evil hateth the light, so he that is a heretic hates orthodox creeds and confessions. Poor Authades! he knows very well that if his church and congregation would strip off his false colors, and get legal proof of his true character, he must lose his hundred pounds per annum. He thinks it no roguery for him to impose upon his church, and cheat them out of their money, and out of their principles; but he thinks it would be a piece of the greatest tyranny, and the most cruel and barbarous persecution,

if they should find him out, and prove him to be a Socinian, and, as such, have him silenced, and take away his hundred pounds per annum. Thus every man lives, and thus he dies; and to be sure, you will, candid Scripturista, join with me to look upon and abhor him, as a thorough practised knave.

For you grant the Calvinistic church had "a right to judge for themselves what was the true sense of Scripture, and what principles were necessary, according to the Holy Scriptures, to be believed and professed in order to be admitted to sealing ordinances, or to be employed as a public instructor." And if they had a right to do so, their doing so was an imposition upon Authades; but Authades was the only man worthy of imposition. He imposed upon the church when he joined with it at first; he still in a higher degree imposed upon the church and congregation too, when he settled in the work of the ministry among them. He wanted their money. He obtained it first by dissimulation, and kept it through his whole life by one series of deceit.

And if Calvinistic churches in the Christian world, in this corrupt age, have reason to fear that there are too many of Authades' character, the very wolves in sheep's clothing our Savior warned us to beware of, (Matt. vii. 15,) can you desire that instead of obeying the divine counsel, they should tamely resign their "right to judge for themselves," and admit to sealing ordinances, and to the work of the ministry, any that offer, without any regard to their principles, and to suffer themselves to be imposed upon in the highest degree, to the great injury of themselves and of their posterity, only to avoid the bitter resentments of such men as Authades, who will cry out, Imposition! imposition! Persecution! persecution! if you only insist on your right, as Christians, to know the articles of their belief, and refuse to admit them to communion and into the ministry, unless they appear to be sound in the faith? No, sir, you can, consistent with your own avowed principles, desire no such thing. But rather, as Christ has made it the indispensable duty of all his followers openly to profess the doctrines of his holy religion, (Matt. x. 22, 32, 33,) charged them to beware of false prophets, (Matt. vii. 15,) and commended them for trying and detecting false pretenders, (Rev. ii. 2;) and as even common sense teaches, that the disciples of Christ have a natural right to know and judge of the religious sentiments of those who claim to be their fellow-disciples, and expect to be treated as such; so, instead of discountenancing the little concern of Calvinistic churches in the present day, to be consistent with yourself, you, who cannot bear to be thought not a Calvinist

ought rather to blame their too great indifference, and call upon them to awake, stand upon their guard and watch, lest cunning, deceitful men slyly creep in, and before we are aware, bring another gospel into our pulpits, and the utmost confusion and discord into our churches. For how can we walk together except we be agreed? (Amos iii. 3;) or keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, except we have one faith, one Lord, one baptism? (Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5.)

But perhaps you will say, "The Calvinists are too suspicious already. There are no Arminians, no Arians, no Socinians, etc., among us. The cry is raised by designing men, merely to answer political ends." O my good Scripturista! O that this were indeed the case! O that our fears were quite groundless! How soon would I believe it, if you could help me to "see just reason for it." But how would the party through New England laugh at our credulity in Connecticut, if their friends among us could make us believe all to be safe till they could carry their points here, as they have elsewhere. In New Hampshire province, this party have actually, three years ago, got things so ripe, that they have ventured to new model our Shorter Catechism; to alter, or entirely leave out, the doctrines of the Trinity, of the decrees of our first parents being created holy, of original sin, Christ satisfying divine justice, effectual calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, assurance of God's love, perseverance in grace, etc., and to adjust the whole to Dr. Taylor's scheme. And in their preface to this new catechism, they tell the world, that "the snarling of party bigots will be little regarded;" that is, if all the Calvinists in the country are disobliged to see their whole scheme given up, they do not care. They look upon us all as snarling bigots, not to be regarded. This is honest: now they speak their hearts, and tell the world how they feel! Come from New Hampshire along to Boston, and see there a celebrated D. D. the head of a large party! He boldly ridicules the doctrine of the Trinity, and denies the doctrine of justification by faith alone, in the sight of all the country, in his book of sermons. Come nearer home, come to Willingford; see there a young gentleman, bold to settle in the ministry, although opposed as a heretic by near half the town. Observe, and see how he conducts. How backward to let his people know his religious sentiments, while on probation! How resolved never to be examined by the Consociation, let it cost what it would, though charged with heresy, and cited to appear before them! Yea, although his opposers offer to accept him for their minister, if upon examination he should appear to be sound in the faith! And yet,

under these, even under these circumstances, he could find ministers to ordain him!

And how does this young gentleman conduct since his ordination? Does he convince the town that he is a sound Calvinist, as he might easily do, if he were? No, far from it. Yea, notwithstanding his opposers, who, before his ordination, had offered to receive him for their minister, if, upon examination by their Consociation, he should be approved as sound in the faith, now, since his ordination, renew the same offer; yea, are willing to leave it to another Consociation, namely Hartford south, then convened at Wallingford; and if they approve him, declare they will accept him for their minister; yet Mr. Dana refuses to do it! He had rather run the venture of all consequences, than to be examined by them! The town may break, himself be deposed, and non-communion be declared against him and his party; but let it cost what it will, he is resolved he will not be examined by them! But why? He knew the Consociation must approve him as orthodox, if he appeared to believe our Confession of Faith, and thus the whole controversy might have been settled in an hour or two; which now is not likely to be settled these many years. And he knew it was no matter whether the Consociation had jurisdiction or not, if both he and his opposers would agree to submit the affair to them. But he was resolved not to do it: and why all this, if he was a sound believer, I cannot conceive.*

Nor is this all; for he has, since these things, even introduced a new method of taking persons into full communion with the church — a method which, however suited to the latitudinarian scheme, yet is entirely subversive of the very foundation on which all our churches in New England were originally settled. To be sure, it appears so to me; and because I would fain know your opinion of it, I will relate the case, and state three questions for you to answer in your next letter to your friend Paulinus. The case is this: The first church in Wallingford, under the Rev. Mr. Street, their first minister, were formed a Calvinistic church. The doctrines of faith which they drew up, to be used in the admission of members, were strictly Calvinistic. This form has been used in that church ever since, in the admission of members. Their former ministers, having publicly read it before all the congregation, used to say to the persons to be admitted, "These articles of the Christian faith you give your assent unto." Instead of which, Mr. Dana, their present minister, (if he may be so called after deposition,)

* For the facts above, the reader is referred to Mr. Eells's Remarks, etc.

says, "These articles of the Christian faith you give your assent unto, so far as you think them agreeable to the word of God." My three questions are these: —

Question 1. Does Mr. Dana, or his church, by such a profession as above, know what principles persons pretend to be of, whom they thus admit to special ordinances? Can they, by such a profession, know whether they mean to be Papists or Protestants, Socinians, Arians, Pelagians, Arminians, or Antinomians? If they can, pray tell me how. For all these different denominations believe, and may profess to believe, these Calvinistic articles of faith, so far as they think them to be agreeable to the word of God.

But if, by this profession, you grant Mr. Dana and his church cannot form any proper judgment of the principles of those who are thus admitted, whether they are Papists or Protestants, Socinians, Arians, etc., I would inquire, —

Quest. 2. Are Papists, Socinians, Arians, etc., all of them orthodox enough to be admitted to sealing ordinances? If not, —

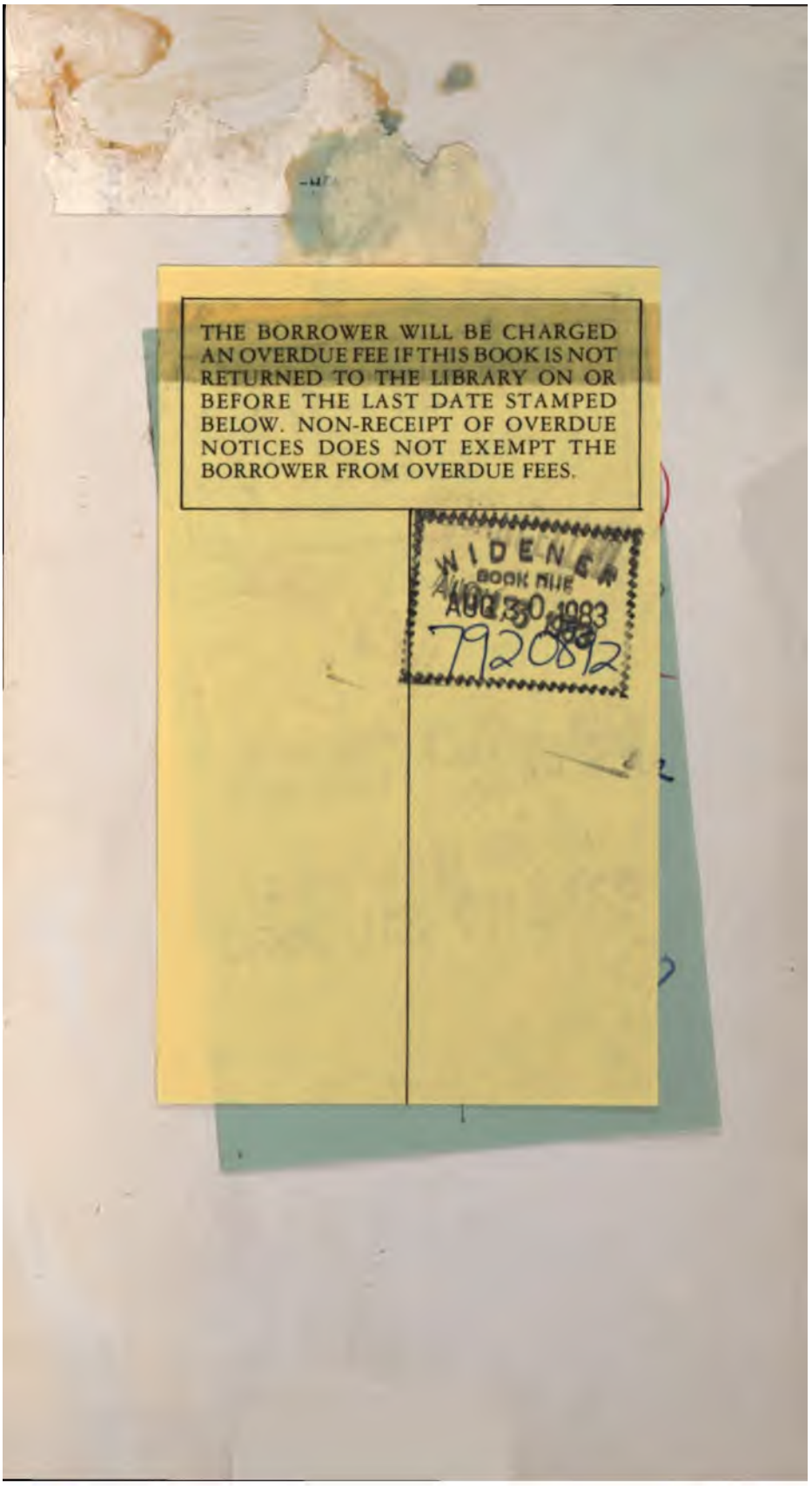
Quest. 3. How can Mr. Dana's conduct in this affair be vindicated, who receives members upon a profession which any heretic in the Christian world can make, and still retain all his errors?

Will it do to say in his excuse, that some of his church are attached to the Calvinistic scheme in which they have been educated; and will be offended if he lays aside their old doctrines of faith, and makes a new creed of a different stamp; and perhaps they may leave him, and join with those who have already rejected him? If he should discover his peculiar principles so plainly, perhaps he would soon have but few hearers; and so this will not do. "And it is right to dissemble a little in so good a cause." And besides, if he himself does not believe their doctrines of faith, it is a hardship to oblige him to lead his people, from time to time, to profess in the most public and solemn manner their belief of them; and to keep back such from special ordinances, who scruple to make such a profession. To prevent all which difficulties, he first reads over their old doctrines of faith, for a blind to the Calvinist part of his church; and then he expresses himself so as to leave those whom he admits at full liberty to believe what they please, and yet be quite orthodox enough at the same time to be admitted into the church of Christ, as his true and faithful followers. But if this be the case, does not one of our former questions need to be reconsidered, namely, "Is it of any importance what men's principles be, if their lives are but good?" For if

indeed it is of no importance, and if pious frauds are justifiable, then we may all do as Mr. Dana does. But if it is of importance, and if we must not dissemble, how can his conduct be justified? Or how can any orthodox church in New England safely receive members by virtue of a recommendation from his church, as being sound in the faith, when it is not known what their faith is?

A speedy and full answer to these questions will greatly oblige,

Sir, your already very much obliged,
And very humble servant,
PAULINUS.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